BUSINESS / B1

Current account surplus hits 7-year high of $5B in '06 due to OFW remittances

NEWS / A5

SC hearing on Satur's petition reset to March 30 at request of prosecutors

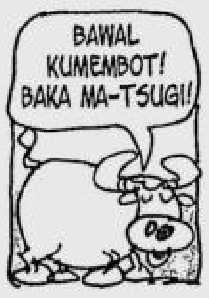
NEWS / A2

Hunger-striking farmers finally installed in Negros hacienda

ENTERTAINMENT / F1

Borat's gal wears Lhuillier on red carpet

Stay in closet, don't sway hips, gay cops told


BAWAL KUMEMBOT! BAKA MA-TSUGI!

STAY IN THE CLOSET. The Philippine National Police yesterday gave this piece of advice to gay officers, warning them not to sway their hips or display other suggestive behavior while on duty—

STAY/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Friday, March 23, 2007 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 105 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Bishop Tutu condemns RP rights violations

THE HAGUE—A FORUM MADE UP OF LAWYERS and human rights activists opened a hearing on Wednesday into alleged human and political rights violations by the Philippine government, hoping to raise global awareness of the issue.

In South Africa, Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu, 75, archbishop emeritus of Cape Town, yesterday condemned the political violence in the Philippines and called on President

BISHOP/ A18

Iggy's wife fears for life

Court orders 'Jose Pidal' to stay away from her

INQUIRER PHOTO FILE

REP. IGNACIO ARROYO: All of that is not true. She's just looking for a reason to win the custody battle. The bottom line is money.

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE MAN WHO CLAIMED TO BE JOSE PIDAL was ordered on Wednesday by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court to keep his distance from his wife and 9-year-old daughter, whom he has allegedly abandoned.

Judge Rosalina L. Luna Pison of Quezon City RTC Branch 107 ordered Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo, younger brother of President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, "to stay away at a distance of 100 meters" from his wife, Alicia Rita M. Arroyo, their child, and family and other household members. *(Arroyo's side on Page A19.)*

Alicia Arroyo, former chair of the Philippine Stock Exchange, had pleaded with the court to issue the protection order because, she said, her life and that of the child were in danger and the lawmaker belonged to the "most powerful political family in the country."

In issuing the order, Pison granted Alicia's petition for the issuance of a 30-day temporary protection order for her "protection and interest" as well as that of her child and members of her family.

The order stemmed from a custody battle docketed as Civil Case No. Q-07-59606 and lodged by Congressman Arroyo to allow him and Alicia "equal visitorial and custodial rights and parental authority" over the child.

IGGY'S WIFE/ A19

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

ALICIA MORALES-ARROYO: Life with Iggy went from "very blissful" to "lies, treachery and debauchery."

GMA orders 10% pay hike for government civilian workers

LESS THAN TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE crucial midterm elections, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered a 10-percent across-the-board increase in the monthly pay of all civilian employees of the government in the national and local levels.

Through Executive Order No. 611, Ms Arroyo also raised the monthly hazard pay and daily subsistence allowance of military and police personnel.

The compensation adjustments mandated by EO 611 will take effect on July 1.

"I have just signed an executive order . . . adding yet another compensation increase for government employees," Ms Arroyo said at the commencement rites of Sansinirangan Class of 2007 of the Philippine National Police Academy.

She said the basic salary of government employees had not been increased since July 2001 despite periodic wage adjustments in the private sector and the steady rise in the prices of basic commodities.

"There is an imperative need to improve the morale of the civil service through a more competitive compensation system that supports the economic well-being of government personnel," Ms Arroyo said in the executive order dated March 14.

EO 611 directs the Department of Budget and Management to implement a 10-percent increase in the basic salaries of civilian government personnel whose positions are covered by the Compensation and Classification System under Republic Act No. 6758.

Entitled to a pay increase are officials and employees of national government agencies, state universities and colleges, government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs), government financial institutions (GFIs) and local government units (LGUs).

The pay raise for officials and employees of

GMA ORDERS/ A19

Sons of their fathers in new party-lists

By Nikko Dizon

AN ANG, AN OPLE AND A HERRERA have teamed up as the nominees of a party-list group that seeks to represent the country's some 8 million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Congress.

The nominees of Ahon Pinoy!, Dante Francis "Klink" Ang, Bernardo Ople and Ernesto Herrera III filed their certificates of candidacy with the Commission on Elections (Comelec) yesterday, wearing yellow construction workers' hats.

Ang is a son of Dante Ang, chair of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO); Herrera is a son of former Sen. Ernesto Herrara Jr., chair of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), and Ople is a brother of the late Blas Ople, a former labor minister and foreign secretary.

In the present 13th Congress, two party-list groups are represented by the sons of personalities. They are Rene M. Velarde (Buhay)—son of Bro. Mike Velarde, leader of the Gatholic charismatic group El Shaddai; Hans Christian

SONS/ A18

NUMBERS DON'T COMPUTE? Whatever, the figures presented by Education Secretary Jesli Lapus make President Arroyo frown during her regular roundtable discussion at the Kalayaan Hall press briefing room in Malacañang.

LYN RILLON

Congress pork doubles in '07 budget

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

MONTHS BEFORE THE ELECTions and amid new reports of the misuse of the congressional pork barrel, lawmakers have increased their pork allocations, almost doubling their allotments of last year.

The lawmakers took P3.6 billion from the retirement pay of government workers set to retire this year in order to increase their pork barrel, the INQUIRER learned yesterday.

The pork barrel is appropriated from the national budget to fund projects of lawmakers to

CONGRESS/ A18

Pork used to buy overpriced fertilizer

By Tony S. Bergonia

PORK BARREL FUNDS WERE USED TO PURCHASE MORE than 3,000 bottles of liquid fertilizer that were overpriced by as much as P1,450 per bottle and 15 units of irrigation pumps that cost about P500,000 more than their actual price per unit.

The funds, from the pork barrel allocation of Rep. Aurelio

PORK/ A18

FRENCH NUN Blessed Marie-Eugenie, founder of the Religious of the Assumption, will be canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in Rome.

JOAN BONDOC

WORLD WATER DAY

Cry a river over the Bagong Bayan River in Navotas where a boy cools off unmindful of the ebb and flow of floating garbage. This year's theme is water scarcity, a problem driven precisely by, among other chronic factors, the pollution and degradation of bodies of water.

It takes a community to successfully fight TB

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

ROLANDO QUIMPO, A CARPENter who sports a pony tail, wears earrings and a sleeveless shirt, is not shy to show his daily card checks that indicate how he religiously took his daily oral tuberculosis medication for eight months, two months longer than usual.

A recent sputum test, the golden standard of TB tests, gave the 50-year-old grandfather a clean bill of health. He has also distanced himself from cigarettes and alcohol. Now, if he could only get carpentry jobs more often…

Quimpo and his wife were running an *almusalan* (breakfast nook offering cheap porridge and noodles at P5 to P10 per serving) but they had to stop when Quimpo was found to have TB. With Quimpo cured, they are now back in business.

Joel Alluson, 37, a father of two who works as a "freelancer sa Banawe" (he does odd jobs on Banawe Avenue, a car parts retail strip) "graduated" in December 2006 from his six-month daily treatment and is now TB-free. But he still has to have his regular checkup. He first learned about the anti-TB treatment from a TV ad.

The Quimpos and Allusons live in congested Tatalon in

IT TAKES/ A8

Assumption grads urged to return to values of saintly founder Eugenie

By Kristine L. Alave

GRADUATES OF ASSUMPTION COLlege, including its most famous alumna, President Macapagal-Arroyo, have been given a gentle reminder by their alma mater to return to their roots.

School principal Sister Maria Josefina Matias said on Wednesday that the President was both a "tribute" and

ASSUMPTION/ A19

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SUERTRES
Mid-Day 9 3 6 | Evening 8 0 7
(All in exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Mindanao and Eastern Visayas will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/22/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Negros farmers get land, finally

By TJ Burgonio and Carla P. Gomez, *Inquirer Visayas*

AFTER 11 YEARS OF WAGING BATTLE IN THE courtroom and on the streets, 57 of the 122 farmer-beneficiaries of a sugarcane plantation in Negros Occidental subjected to land reform yesterday were finally installed in a portion of the area in the face of stiff resistance by another group of farmers.

FARMERS from a rival group confront a police barricade at the entrance of the hacienda.

CARLA P. GOMEZ / INQUIRER VISAYAS

"This is a victory not only for us, but also for all the farmers and the poor in the country," Eledelyn Paclibar, 55, said in an interview inside the tent the farmers had pitched outside the Department of Agrarian Reform office in Quezon City to call attention to their plight.

Paclibar and 17 other beneficiaries hailed the installation which was led by Secretary Nasser Pangandaman. The event took place on the 29th day of their hunger strike. As a goodwill gesture, they lifted their fast in the afternoon.

Blessing

"This is a blessing that we have not expected," Gregorio Paclibar, 71, said, a smile forming on his lips.

"We're happy about it. We just wished it didn't take a hunger strike to get us installed. But we're happy just the same," Florenda Hilario, 48, who had just returned from the hospital at dawn Thursday after being treated for dehydration, said.

In La Castellana, tension remained high after unionized farm workers identified with landowner Roberto Cuenca vowed they would rather die than let the farmers identified with the militant peasant group Task Force Mapalad possess the contested land.

They also threatened to burn down houses that would be built by the newly installed farmers.

"After this, will the government be able to keep the peace here? The people are faced with an uncertain future," a worried town parish priest Fr. Rolex Nueva said.

The 57 farmer-beneficiaries, who were among the 122 that were given certificates of land ownership awards (Cloas) in 2002, were personally installed in a small portion of the 400-hectare sugar estate by Pangandaman.

Tense negotiations

The farmers were installed after hours of tense and protracted negotiations with leaders of the unionized farmhands that have refused to let the farmer-beneficiaries enter the farm.

Before the installation, a melee erupted as the unionized workers began throwing stones at the land reform beneficiaries. The farmhands and their families, estimated to be about 200, some weeping and shouting invectives at the beneficiaries and the police, had formed a human barricade as early as 6 a.m. at the entrance of the hacienda.

Pangandaman, who arrived at the site before 8 a.m., and the police tried to negotiate for the peaceful entry of some 100 TFM beneficiaries so they could be installed in the lots awarded to them in 2002 by the government.

But the unionized workers refused to budge until about 10:30 a.m. when some of the enraged workers broke the line and began throwing big stones at the TFM members that had massed at the entrance of the farm.

Policemen, carrying riot shields and sticks, moved in to push back the human barricade and formed a shield for the farmer beneficiaries.

The police quickly rounded up some 30 male workers who were believed to be responsible for the stone-throwing incident.

'Enforcing the law'

The beneficiaries who had camped outside the DAR building in Quezon City thanked Pangandaman for "enforcing the law" and apologized to him for the sharp remarks they had uttered over his previous failure to install them and the rest of the beneficiaries.

They also thanked the Catholic bishops who appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to have the farmers installed, and other members of the church, students, artists, who showed up at the tent to try to boost their morale, and said prayers.

AGRARIAN Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman leads Mapalad farmers into the contested plantation.

CARLA P. GOMEZ / INQUIRER VISAYAS

WELCOME
ATION OF HACIENDA

The farmers camped outside the DAR office on Feb. 20 and started skipping meals the next day in protest of Pangandaman's failure to install them a number of times since late last year. After the secretary failed yet again to install them on March 8, they vowed to fast till death.

The DAR placed the farm under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in 1996. Cuenca went to court to question the decision. In 2002, the department granted the 122 beneficiaries a collective certificate of landownership award on 114-ha.

Two years later, the Supreme Court ruled that all controversies pertaining to agrarian reform fell under DAR's jurisdiction, clearing the way for the installation.

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SWS SURVEY REJOINDER

Missed meals don't mean hunger – GMA

By Michael Lim Ubac and Volt Contreras

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, TOO, skips meals once in a while, but this does not mean she is one of the hungry poor.

"I missed one meal during the last three months," she quipped during yesterday's roundtable discussion on the administration's hunger-mitigating programs.

The President assured Filipinos the government was on track to wipe out hunger in six months.

"In our anti-hunger program, we attend to both the demand and supply of food," she said, "so we attend to more food production, bringing the food to the consumers at a lower logistic cost like [through] farm to market roads, preprocessing (the farm produce)."

On the demand side, the income of families should go up so they could buy more food, she said.

The Social Weather Stations conducted its quarterly survey on hunger last month and it showed that the "hunger incidence" in Filipino households remained at a high 19 percent.

Question on hunger

SWS posed this question in Filipino to 1,200 household heads nationwide: "*Nitong nakaraang tatlong buwan, nangyari po ba kahit minsan na ang inyong pamilya ay nakaranas ng gutom at wala kayong makain?*"

("In the past three months, was there a time, even once, that your family experienced hunger and did not have anything to eat?")

"The question on hunger—if you missed one meal during the last three months—even I missed one meal in the last three months, but..," she said, leaving the sentence hanging as she refused to say if this was due to a diet or her hectic schedule.

The President said hunger was caused primarily by "lack of income," particularly for the coconut farmers who were "among the very poor ones."

Aside from a school-feeding program, Ms Arroyo announced three ways to achieve her anti-hunger goal: The use of the coco levy funds to increase the incomes of the coconut farmers; teaching Filipinos right spending habits (cutting down on unnecessary items like alcohol); and teaching responsible parenthood (birth spacing and breast-feeding to curb dependence on infant formula).

The President, with roundtable guests Education Secretary Jesli Lapus and Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral, said the government was not sleeping on the job while a large portion of the population was unemployed and hungry.

Cabral said the food-for-school program was "very successful, that's why in the beginning of last year, the hunger (incidence) went down actually."

But she admitted that last year's reenacted budget derailed the program which had given poor families, through their children in the public schools, a kilo of rice each school day.

270 meals in 3 months

In an earlier phone interview, Cabral said that on average, a person eats 270 meals in three months—at three meals a day. If one misses a meal during that period, does that qualify him as one of the starving poor?

Cabral doubted the hunger rate could be determined by "that question" asked in the SWS survey.

"When you say one in five people went hungry, you have to qualify what 'going hungry' means," she said. "Missing one meal out of 270 may not mean much; missing two out of three meals a day is another matter."

"There is no doubt about our widespread poverty, but questions focusing on missed meals should be put in proper perspective," she said, adding: "I think there are other ways of measuring hunger and poverty that will reflect their true state, more than the current question (would)."

Cabral, a former hospital administrator who had said in previous interviews that she adheres to an "evidence-based" approach in her job at the Department of Social Welfare and Development, pointed out that the survey question did not qualify whether the hunger was "involuntary" or not.

Court accepts changes to suit vs Mike A

By DJ Yap

THE CLASS ACTION SUIT FILED BY A number of journalists and media organizations against the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo can finally move forward after a Makati court accepted their amendments to the complaint.

The changes included the omission of the word "each" in the amount of damages the journalists are seeking from President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, whom they accused of curtailing press freedom after he filed a slew of libel cases against them.

"...Liberality in allowing amendments in the early stages of a lawsuit persuade this court to grant the same," said Judge Zenaida Galapate-Laguilles of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 143.

The original complaint demanded from Arroyo P2 million in actual damages, P5 million in moral damages, P5 million in exemplary damages and P500,000 in attorney's fees—for a total of P12,500,000—for "each" of the plaintiffs.

But the complainants—36 journalists and three media organizations—said the word "each" was a clerical error and should be omitted. They said the damages were being sought by the group as a whole.

If each of them were to claim damages, the P250,000 in docket fees they originally paid was insufficient, according to the computation of the clerk of court of Makati.

Arroyo, in a reply filed on March 5, said it was clear the use of the word "each" clearly denoted that "each of the plaintiffs desires to recover."

"It is difficult to believe that plaintiffs, all seasoned journalists who claimed they read the complaint before verifying it, would miss that supposed typo," he said.

"The bottom line is that plaintiffs intended to mislead to save on docket fees," Arroyo said.

In the same order allowing the amendments dated March 16, Laguilles said the dispute over the docket fee would be resolved in a preliminary hearing she set for April 12.

"The claim that this court has no jurisdiction due to the inability (of the complainants) to pay the correct docket fees and, hence, there is nothing to amend is yet to be addressed during the preliminary hearing," she said.

The other amendments the journalists had sought had to do with corrections to some names and addresses.

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CAYETANO DEFENSE

RP passport, US visa for an 'American'

By Nikko Dizon

WILL THE US EMBASSY ISSUE A tourist visa to an American citizen?

Opposition senatorial candidate Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano raised the point to counter the petition filed by a former town mayor seeking his disqualification on the grounds he was a United States citizen.

Cayetano's US visa, issued in 1998 and set to expire next year, was one of the pieces of evidence his lawyer presented at a Commission on Elections hearing yesterday on former Pateros Mayor Jose Capco's charge that Cayetano was not a Filipino citizen and, therefore, was not qualified to run for the Senate.

"Does an American citizen need a US tourist visa to enter the United States?" Cayetano asked reporters after the hearing, brandishing his Philippine passport with the US visa stamped on it.

Cayetano, whose mother is an American, said he had long given up his US citizenship because he wanted to "live, serve and die" in the Philippines.

"This was the script that they used against FPJ (Fernando Poe Jr.). They should change it," Cayetano said in Filipino, referring to the disqualification petition the government filed against the late actor and 2004 presidential candidate.

Cayetano dismissed Capco, who is reportedly running for Congress in the May 14 elections, as a "nuisance complainant."

Capco, he said, "just got his documents from Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez."

"The Bureau of Immigration has already said that I am a natural-born Filipino," Cayetano said.

He said the disqualification petition was part of the machinations of Jose Miguel Arroyo, the President's husband, to derail his candidacy, after he had charged the First Family with maintaining secret accounts in a German bank.

He said the candidacy of the unknown Joselito "Pepito" Cayetano under the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan banner was part of the plot.

Capco, however, maintained that Cayetano was a "fair-weather Filipino" who only claims Filipino citizenship when it is beneficial to him.

Talking to reporters after the hearing, Capco said Cayetano's father, the late Sen. Rene Cayetano, worked to have his son recognized as a Filipino citizen by the Bureau of Immigration in March 1992.

"He (Alan) was already 22 years old then, enjoying dual citizenship. He should have been the one to ask the Bureau of Immigration," Capco said.

"And the timing was suspect because he was then going to run for councilor in Taguig-Pateros," he added.

Cayetano said he would be filing an "urgent motion" with the Comelec soon for a decision on the disqualification petition he had lodged against Joselito Cayetano, after Ilocos Norte Gov. and KBL president Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. disowned the present crop of KBL candidates, including their leader, lawyer Oliver Lozano.

Cayetano said the effect of having two Cayetanos running for the Senate became evident in the latest Pulse Asia survey.

He said Pulse Asia confirmed that he would have landed within the second to fourth slots, and not the 10th to 15th, had all the Cayetano votes been counted for him.

"Even Pulse Asia was confused," he said.

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Namfrel gets quick count accreditation

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMelec) has accredited the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) as the citizens' group that will conduct the quick count in the May 14 mid-term elections.

"There's a resolution already being signed by the commissioners," Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos, Sr. said in a phone interview.

Abalos said the announcement came prior to the release of the Comelec resolution because Commissioner Ressurreccion Borra mentioned Namfrel's accreditation at a press conference earlier yesterday.

Election lawyer, Sixto Brillantes, questioned Namfrel's capability to conduct a quick count after it failed to submit some 80 percent of the quick count results required by the Comelec in the 2004 presidential elections.

Brillantes had also pointed out that Namfrel's chair, Jose Concepcion, Jr., is an incumbent barangay captain, in violation of the non-partisan nature of an election watchdog.

But Concepcion said he has already inhibited himself from the quick count proceedings and that the Namfrel board of council would be meeting to elect its new chair.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, March 23, 2007
4th Week of Lent
Toribio de Mogrovejo

1st Reading:	Wis 2:1, 12:22
Gospel:	John 5:17-30

Jesus went around Galilee; he would not go about in Judea because the Jews wanted to kill him. Now the Jewish feast of the Tents was at hand.

But after his brothers had gone to the festival, he also went up, not publicly but in secret.

Some of the people of Jerusalem said, "Is this not the man they want to kill? And here he is speaking freely, and they don't say a word to him? Can it be that the rulers know that this is really the Christ? Yet we know where this man comes from; but when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from."

So Jesus announced in a loud voice in the Temple court where he was teaching, "You say that you know me and know where I come from! I have not come of myself; I was sent by the One who is true, and you don't know him. I know him for I come from him and he sent me."

They would have arrested him, but no one laid hands on him because his time had not yet come.

Commentary

The just man is a judgment on those who are wicked. And those who do evil work against the one who is holy, pure, blest, and "boasts that God is his Father." This is perversity and evil, violence and injustice directed against one who reveals goodness and God. And they know nothing of God (anyone who kills, murders, plots to destroy others). These lines reflect what happened often to the prophets, and also what happened to Jesus the beloved Son of the Father who was bold in his preaching even when they sought a way to kill him. Jesus teaches in the temple. He proclaims that he has been sent by One who has the right to send. "And him you do not know. I know him because it is from him I come: he sent me." Do we know the One who sent Jesus? Do we really know Jesus, so holy and pure and true, that his very presence is a judgment on us?

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More jail time for Satur after hearing reset

By Leila B. Salaverria and Tina G. Santos

BAYAN MUNA REP. SATUR OCAMPO WILL remain in detention at least one more week, and he would be staying in Manila, after the Supreme Court yesterday reset the hearing on his petition to recall the arrest warrant issued against him by a Leyte court.

Oral arguments on Ocampo's petition were originally set for today, but this was moved to March 30 after Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera asked for more time to file her comment.

The other respondents in Ocampo's petitio—Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Hilongos (Leyte) Judge Ephrem Abando and prosecutors Cesar Merin and Rosulo Vivero—were earlier given five days, or until March 21, to file their comments.

Ocampo's lawyer Neri Colmenares said his client should not be made to suffer in detention just because the Solicitor General was not ready for the oral arguments.

"The fact that the SolGen is not ready to argue shows that the evidence is weak and is difficult to defend," Colemenares said.

Ocampo himself said, "I should not suffer continuing detention because of the government's inability to argue."

"They're having a hard time finding evidence against me because all their allegations were fabricated, they're violating my rights," he said.

A victory

Nevertheless, he called the postponement "a victory" because it preempted [the] Philippine National Police move to transport him to Leyte.

On Monday, the police forcibly hauled Ocampo off to Leyte in a private plane to face murder charges stemming from the discovery of a mass grave in Hilongos said to hold the remains of suspected spies within the communist movement who were killed in the '80s.

The plane was ordered to turn back in mid-flight, however, after the authorities received Abando's order allowing Ocampo to remain in Manila until the Supreme Court had decided on his petition.

Ocampo was arrested on Friday last week at the Supreme Court when he turned up to file his petition.

Ocampo, meanwhile, has brought his case to the attention of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism based in Geneva, Switzerland.

In a four-page letter to Martin Scheinin, Ocampo related his arrest and aborted transfer to Leyte on charges he was one of the masterminds of an alleged communist purge that happened over 20 years ago.

"It is my firm view that all these trumped-up charges, the political killings, and various forms of harassment are intended to discredit me and my party before the people and to stop us from winning again in the party-list election," he wrote Scheinin.

No due process

"The Philippine version of the Anti-Terrorism Act, euphemistically titled the Human Security Act, is set to be implemented in July 2007. Yet government authorities have already disregarded the observance of due process and the rights of the accused in cases against government critics tagged as enemies of the state."

Ocampo included a summary of the arguments his lawyers were set to present before the Supreme Court today. His defense team includes Romeo Capulong, Rachel Pastores and Amylyn Sato of the Public Interest Law Center.

Meanwhile, Deputy Director General Reynaldo P. Varilla, National Capital Regional Police Office chief, ordered the deployment of an additional 500 policemen to the Manila Police District headquarters on United Nations Avenue in anticipation of a big pro-Ocampo rally by militant groups today. *With Christian V. Esguerra and Nancy C. Carvajal*

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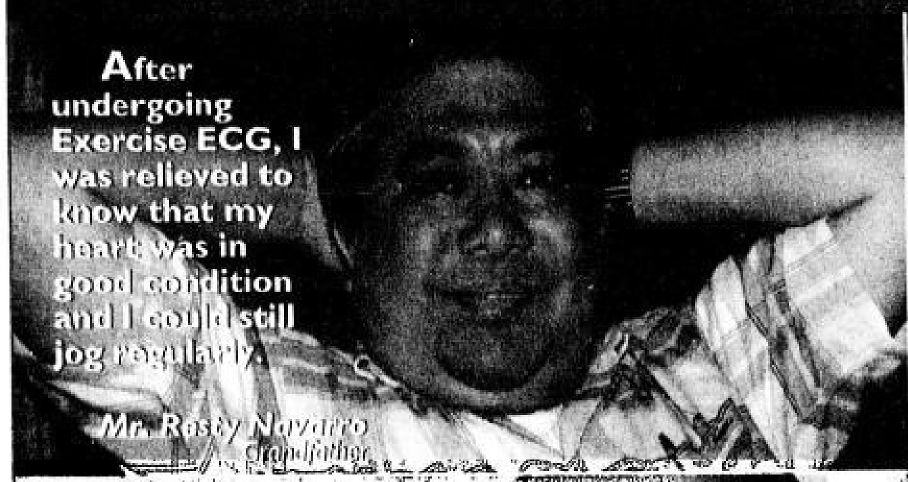
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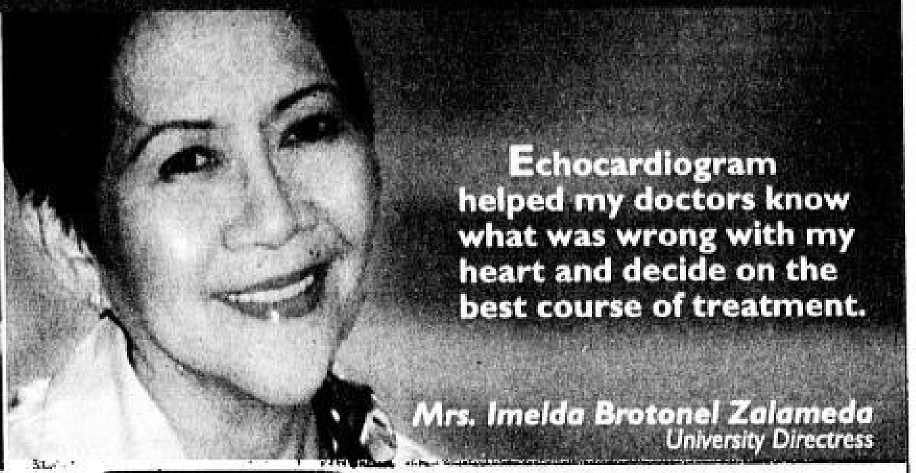
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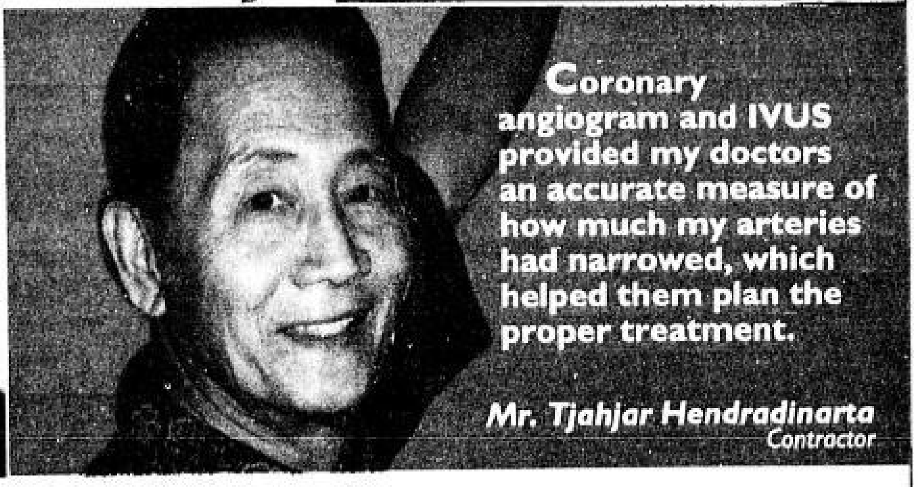
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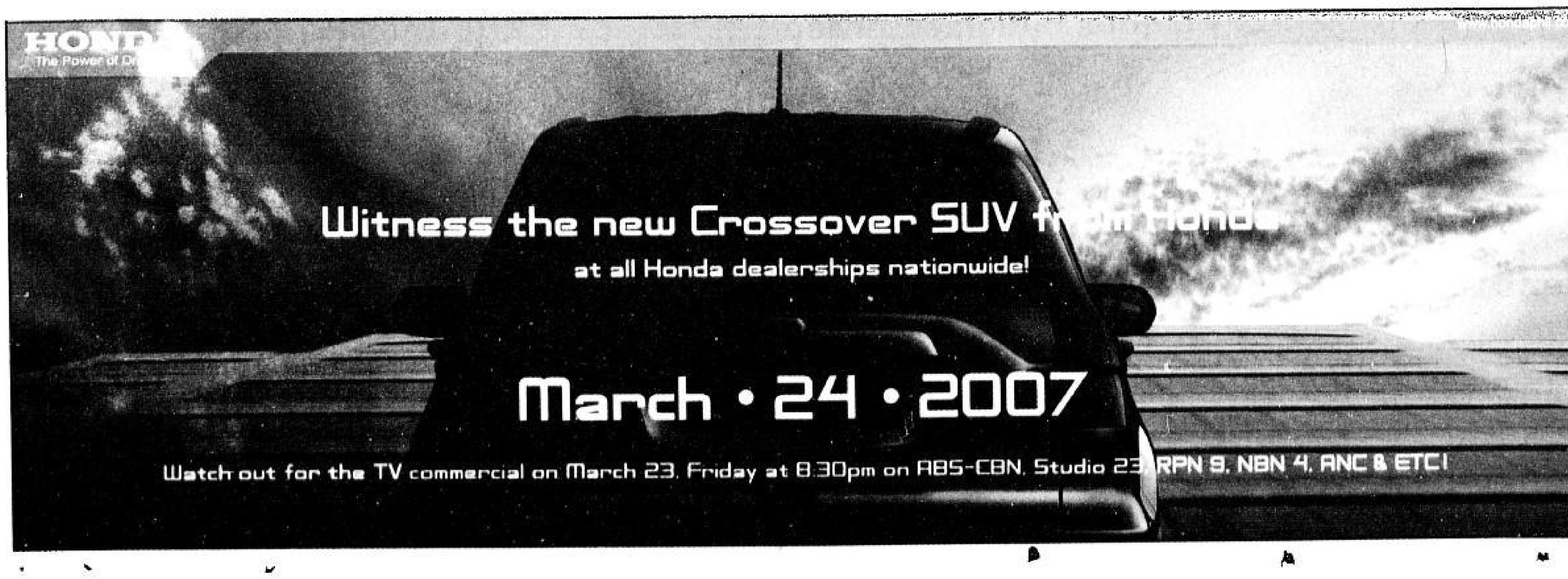
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Tell all, Ping urges ex-beauty queen, mom

By Norman Bordadora

LAOAG CITY—RE-ELECTIONIST SEN. Panfilo Lacson of the Genuine Opposition yesterday urged former government supplier Blanquita Pelaez to identify in a sworn statement, all administration officials who caused her daughter to vilify opposition leaders.

Lacson made the call after deposed President Joseph Estrada was reported to be considering charges against such administration candidates as Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Singson and erstwhile Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor in connection with accusations made by former beauty queen Joelle Pelaez.

"It depends on the law. Whoever suborned Blanquita Pelaez to commit perjury is liable for subornation to perjury…. If you induce a person either through intimidation or promise of reward or actual giving of reward or incentive, the charge will be subornation of perjury," said Lacson, a former PNP chief.

"My request to Blanquita is to tell all regarding the personalities who told her to vilify certain personalities. But unless reduced to affidavit form, that's nothing. There's no probative value. An affidavit is important for a case to be filed," he added.

Lacson's remarks come in the wake of Pelaez's confessions over television and radio earlier this week that it was Defensor who paid for her daughter Joelle's round-trip plane tickets to the Philippines and shopping, in return for Joelle's agreement to file money laundering charges against Estrada.

It was also alleged that Singson paid for their accommodation at the same hotel and also provided the bodyguards to secure Joelle during her stay in the country.

"President Erap was surprised when Blanquita came out in the news. Nobody knew that she's coming out. I had no idea," Lacson said to dispel any thought that it was the opposition this time who got to Blanquita to put the government in a bad light.

He said the welfare of the mother and daughter after the alleged deal with the administration may have been "mishandled by those who were supposed to take care of them."

"Well you can say that. Their case may have been mishandled. Didn't Rosebud (former PNP asset Mary "Rosebud" Ong) do the same thing? She threatened to spill the beans when she was not paid what she was asking for. And then they were able to handle her again," Lacson said.

Through his spokesperson, former Immigration Commissioner Rufus Rodriguez, Estrada said he welcomed Blanquita's pronouncements in the media.

"I feel vindicated before the court of public opinion," Rodriguez quoted Estrada as saying.

Estrada also said Blanquita's remarks supported his belief that Joelle's accusations against him were "both bogus and contrived."

Rodriguez said the timing of Joelle's accusations was almost immediately suspect as they came in the days leading to Estrada's appearance before the Sandiganbayan to testify in his own defense in his plunder case.

Joelle accused Estrada of using her bank account to launder money but failed to file money laundering charges against him.

Singson alleged that Estrada was attracted to Joelle during his aborted term in Malacañang and that the then-President would give Joelle expensive gifts.

She filed a case of simple deceit before the Makati Prosecutor's Office. The charge has since been dismissed.

Both Pelaezes are now facing libel charges before the Rizal Prosecutor's Office for their accusations against Estrada.

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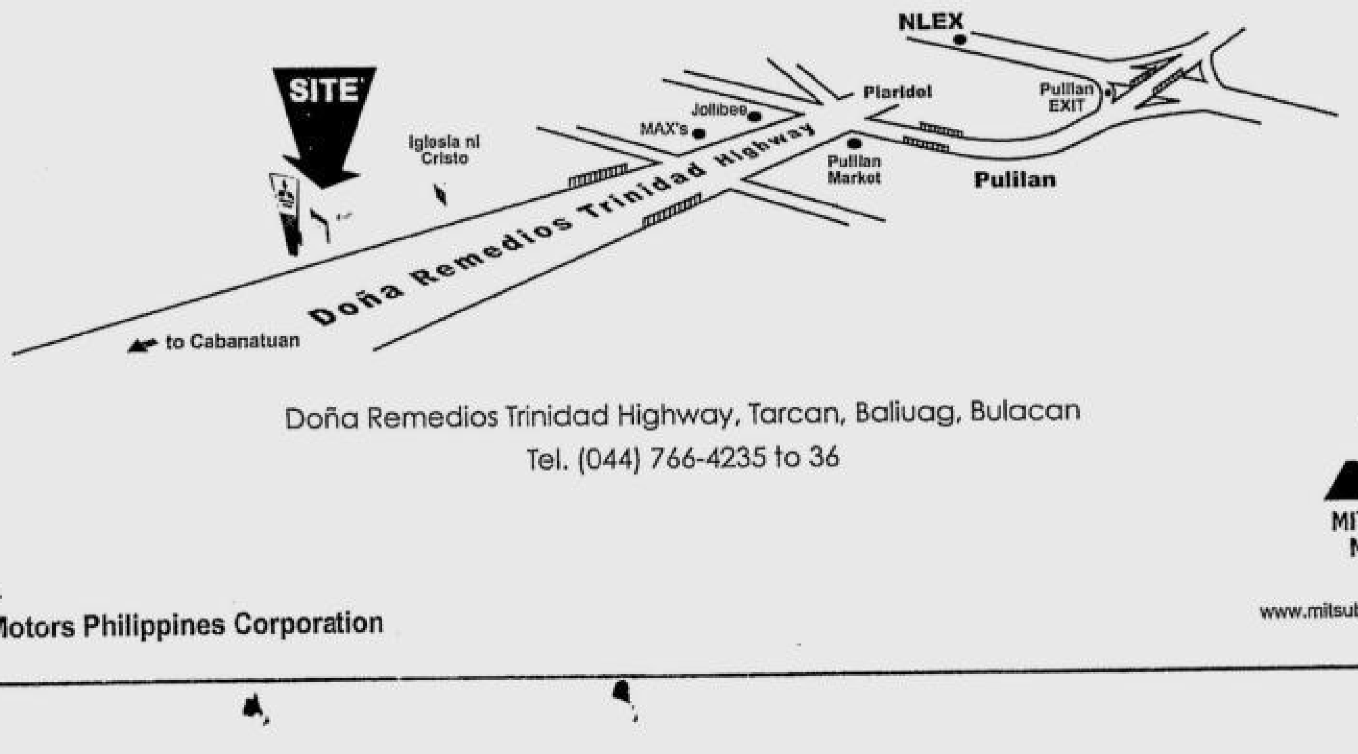

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Kiram: No questions on Sabah, please

By Cynthia D. Balana

LEGAZPI CITY—"NO QUESTIONS ON THE Sabah claim, please."

Thus said senatorial candidate Sultan Jamalul Kiram of Sulu, the only Muslim in the 12-man Team Unity senatorial ticket, whenever he is asked by reporters about his position on the issue of the Philippines' claim over Sabah.

Kiram said he had been prohibited by President Macapagal-Arroyo from talking about the Sabah claim during the campaign period so as not to strain the country's diplomatic relations with Malaysia.

Kiram said he would make public his position on the issue "in due time."

"But sometimes I mentioned it because of their (audience) ignorance about Sabah. I am being introduced in campaign sorties as the Sultan of North Borneo but people don't know where it is. North Borneo, that is Sabah which is owned by Kiram," he said.

Kiram would usually jokeabout his royal title everytime his teammates in the coalition would refer to him as high royal highness.

"*Sabi ko* I'm the sultan of Sulu and of Sabah but I', rich only in title because I have no money," he said.

He disclosed that, so far, he had already spent P3 million for his campaign, a small amount compared to those of other senatorial candidates.

Kiram said that unlike other candidates in Team Unity, he was not aspiring to be in the top 6 candidates in the May senatorial elections.

"I am not aspiring to be No. 1 but No. 12 because if you vote 12-0, the twelfth winner will be me. That's already fine with me," he said.

When asked about his stand on Muslims selling pirated DVDs and CDs which is also a big problem in this city, Kiram said not all Muslims were engaged in illegal activities.

Virgilio R. Garcia; 66

VIRGILIO "BIRING" R. GARCIA DIED ON March 15 at the age of 66. He is survived by his wife Charing; children and children-in-law Jonathan and Rose, Joshua and Kookie, Japhet and Melissa, Joyce and Sander; brothers Rading, Efren, Jovito; sister Rebecca; grandchildren, nephews and nieces.

His body lies at their residence at 1050 F. Yuseco St., Tondo, Manila. Interment will be on Saturday at 9 a.m.. at the Manila North Cemetery.

Corrections

IN THE MARCH 16 ISSUE, a story on Page A23—"Baguio to stockpile on bird flu drug"—erroneously described the drug oseltamivir as a vaccine. The drug is taken orally and is not injected as a vaccine.

* * *

IN THE MARCH 20 ISSUE, Conrado de Quiros' "There's the Rub" column on Page A10—"The outlaw"—misstated the name of the highest award accorded to a Filipino soldier by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The award is called the Medal of Valor—not the Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor is given by the United States—not the AFP.

The same column in the Opinion section also misstated that there are only two living recipients of the Medal of Valor. There are more than two living recipients of the prestigious award.

The same mistakes appeared in De Quiros' column—"What's that matter with the opposition?"—on Page A12 of the Opinion section in the March 22 issue.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com. ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

GO-Lakas alliance in the works, says Lacson

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.
and Norman Bordadora

A POSSIBLE ALLIANCE AT THE LOCAL GOVernment level between the dominant Lakas-CMD and the Genuine Opposition is in the works just a week before the last day of filing of candidacies for governors, mayors and councilors.

Reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson of GO yesterday said that confidantes of Lakas chair emeritus former President Fidel V. Ramos had started "backroom negotiations" with opposition officials for an unlikely alliance borne out of Lakas' on-going dispute with Kampi, the political party of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Lacson said "people very close to him (Ramos)" seriously entertained the idea of a Lakas-GO alliance at the local level.

"I myself cannot imagine how this will come about but people close to the Lakas leadership gave a positive initial reaction. His allies are opening the doors and they have kept an open mind about this," said Lacson.

"I really believe FVR (Ramos) is very smart and I am wondering why it took him so long to react to Kampi raiding Lakas and trying to marginalize Lakas in many areas. These people should be smart enough to realize that if that is the situation on the ground during the campaign, their days are numbered in the House of Representatives and they will be taken over by Kampi," said Lacson.

Raiding Lakas

Kampi, under the baton of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, the President's husband, had systematically raided the ranks of its coalition partner Lakas to boost its power base and extend its influence beyond the end of the President's term in 2010.

"Probably they (Kampi) are not so comfortable with Lakas having the leadership in the House and they want to make sure their control is iron-clad (by replacing Speaker Jose de Venecia). They are not just sending a message, they are stabbing him (De Venecia) in the back. It's ironic that it has taken a non-Lakas member to tell them or to see through what they are doing to Lakas," said Lacson.

Lacson said Lakas' disillusionment with Malacañang could be traced to the President's failure to deliver on her commitment, in exchange for Ramos' and De Venecia's critical show of support at the height of "Hello Garci" scandal, to have the Constitution amended.

In Laoag City, in spite of deposed President Joseph Estrada's call on opposition candidates to attend the GO's campaign sortie in the city, only five of its candidates managed to make the trip.

Only five

Reelectionists Senate President Manuel Villar and Lacson and former senators Loren Legarda, Ana Dominique Coseteng and John Osmeña were the only candidates who addressed the crowd of around 400 in front of the Ilocos Norte capitol on Wednesday night.

"We understand that some candidates had to be elsewhere. The GO blitz is on and some candidates have to be in other places to make up for lost ground (in areas where they are perceived to have weak chances)," said one of GO's campaign leaders and Estrada's son, San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito.

The GO blitz is a new campaign strategy of the opposition wherein candidates break up and go on individual sorties to cover bigger ground.

Former Ambassador Ernesto Maceda, a member of the United Opposition's executive committee, said he still believed the turnout of candidates was "still a good number" since the rally venue was not "exactly a regional center."

"But some candidates will send representatives. I myself can represent (detained former Navy officer Antonio) Trillanes," Maceda said hours before the rally.

Estrada's call on candidates to attend played a major role in GO's Davao City rally wherein all candidates, except the detained Trillanes, were present.

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TB may become 200 times more costly to treat–WHO

TUBERCULOSIS, THE WORLD'S deadliest curable infectious disease, may become 200 times more costly to treat and almost impossible to cure unless the spread of a drug-resistant strain is halted, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

Drug-resistant TB is now widespread in the Western Pacific region, with high levels documented in China, Mongolia and the Philippines, the WHO's Western Pacific office in Manila said in a statement.

In some countries, the management of multidrug-resistant TB, or MDR-TB, is not yet available or has failed to meet acceptable standards.

The WHO warned that failure to address the threat will result in more deaths and chronic cases.

XDR-TB

There is also a risk of spreading XDR-TB, an even more drug-resistant strain.

XDR-TB develops when the second-line drugs used to treat drug-resistant TB are misused or mismanaged and become ineffective.

Tuberculosis infects 3.5 million people and kills nearly 300,000 yearly in the Western Pacific despite recent progress by countries to provide better health care, the UN agency said. It estimates 1.7 million people die worldwide from TB every year.

"Just one case is enough to set alarm bells ringing," said Shigeru Omi, WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific.

He urged countries to put in place a strong TB drug-resistance surveillance system and adequate laboratory capacity to diagnose multidrug-resistant TB. He also called for free treatment and infection control policies to prevent spread of drug-resistant TB in health facilities.

$2 billion needed

He said up to $2 billion is needed to implement high-quality TB control in the region.

WHO said the statement was meant to update the situation on TB ahead of Saturday's World Stop TB Day.

Drug-resistant TB is just as easily transmissible as ordinary TB, which is spread by coughing and sneezing.

People can develop or acquire drug-resistant TB due to incorrect or incomplete drug regimens or poor quality drugs, as well as by being infected with drug-resistant TB bacteria.

On the Net: WHO Western Pacific: http://www.wpro.who.int

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It takes a community ...

From page A1

Quezon City where most houses are cramped, with little breathing space. Infectious diseases like TB spread easily if a sick person remains untreated. A tracking and monitoring system is key. Tatalon barangay volunteer worker Iluminada Basilio does her rounds to check on patients.

Home treatment

For their TB treatment, both Quimpo and Alluson had to go daily to the DOTS (directly observed treatment short-course) center near their homes. Lucky for them, they live near Quezon Institute (QI), the country's biggest TB hospital where a DOTS center (one of dozens in Metro Manila) is located.

Vita M., 52, who also runs an *almusalan*, is also a recovered DOTS patient. She was coughing a lot, she recalls, and had low-grade fevers that wouldn't go away. Although a diabetic, Vita recovered with flying colors. Diabetics are more prone to TB, Dr. Jeanne Valderrama of the Philippine Tuberculosis Society Inc. (PTSI) DOTS center says, because TB bacteria thrive on sugar.

Positive X-ray and sputum test findings need not mean staying in a TB institution. The advent of DOTS and multidrug therapy have made lung surgery a thing of the past. Domiciliary or home treatment is now the norm. Those with severe hemoptysis (severe bleeding with coughing) have to be confined, of course.

Manuel L., 64, a plumber from Cavite, was admitted in January. He will be discharged soon, his doctor says. But medication will be continued at home.

Dr. Violeta Perez, a PTSI DOTS physician who shuttles from one DOTS center to another, says that patients are educated on how to prevent the spread of TB through simple practices such as the use of face masks or covering the mouth when coughing or expectorating.

"We tell them to have a container with chlorox into which they should spit," she says.

Perez bewails the attitude that makes patients drop out in midstream. "We need to make them realize that feeling well does not mean they're okay." They have to finish the treatment otherwise they will become prone to a more virulent strain that is drug-resistant.

That is why sending a patient home with a six-month supply of DOTS medicines does not work, Perez explains. DOTS patients have to report to a center near their homes or to a health worker and take the medicine right there. Then their "report cards" are filled for the day.

And it is not enough that a case is identified. Contact-tracing is important. Who are the others? Where are they? The DOTS campaign included easy-to-read stickers on tricycles that would encourage the infected to come out of the woodwork.

In the PTSI DOTS center alone where 176 patients were examined in 2005, the success rate for the 88 bacilli excreters (first timers, with positive sputum test) was 90 percent.

DOTS and MDGs

DOTS is an anti-TB treatment campaign being waged by governments, health NGOs and private institutions the world over. It is defined as "a treatment protocol designed to ensure greater patient compliance and improve cure rates."

In the DOTS scheme, patients are given their pills daily and are made to swallow them in front of a health worker. Those who miss their doze are tracked down and made to continue.

DOTS has five elements: 1) government commitment to sustained TB control, 2) sputum smear microscopy to detect the infectious disease, a standardized short-course treatment program, 4) regular, uninterrupted supply of the drugs, 5) monitoring and reporting system for evaluation purposes.

The dramatic global reduction of TB cases (along with HIV/AIDS and malaria) is one of the eight so-called millennium development goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations to be met by 2015.

The Department of Health (DOH) is a leading DOTS proponent. But private institutions like the PTSI have many anti-TB and DOTS centers in the country. PTSI runs QI which sits on a sprawling 12-hectare estate established in the 1930s by President Quezon.

QI

The hospital could accommodate 1,200 patients at one time. Now, QI has space for only 200 and not all beds are taken. The rest of the complex is being used by several groups, the biggest of which is the Philippines Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), a main fund source for PTSI.

The art deco-inspired network of buildings designed by famous architect Juan Nakpil, has long, open air corridors meant to bring in lots of fresh air and dispel harmful bacteria.

Unlike other infectious diseases that are transmitted through physical contact, TB is more easily spread through the air. The mycobacterium tuberculosis is easily exhaled in "droplets" in the air. A weak, predisposed person could be infected and get sick.

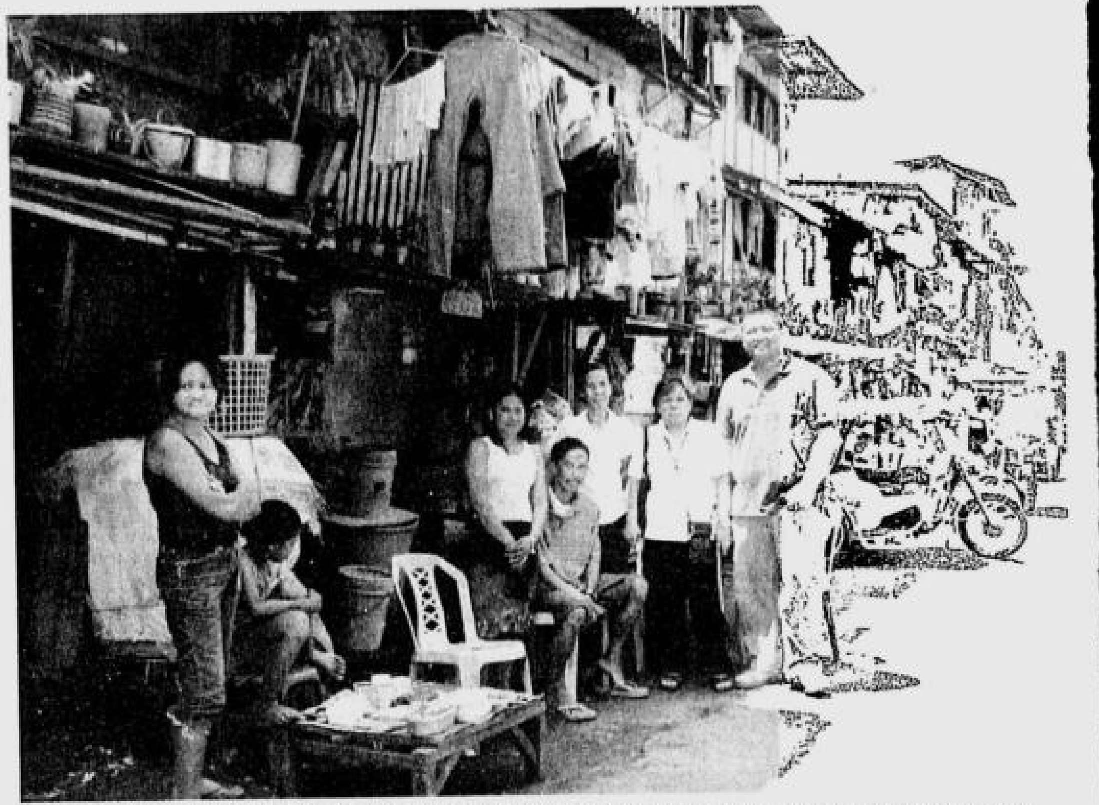
Time was when tuberculosis was a death sentence. In past centuries, faceless millions who suffered from the so-called consumptive disease went through slow, painful deaths. But even the powerful, famous and holy died of it—President Manuel L. Quezon, St. Therese of Lisieux, among them, making the disease a great leveler, so to speak.

Not anymore. Rich and poor alike—the poor especially—could get the disease but the cure is within reach if information and medication could get to them on time, and if they have the discipline to follow a simple treatment regimen.

But for the poor especially, it takes a community. That is, a network of doctors, grassroots health workers, local linkages, families and even next-door neighbors, to get TB patients to pull themselves out their dark crevices and go into the sunlight. Those are not figures of speech, TB bacteria die fast in the sunlight and TB patients need not keep their condition a secret because the stigma attached to the disease is slowly dying away.

But TB bacteria, unlike viruses that are self-limiting, could live on. DOTS hopes to put a dot on TB.

(The PTSI DOTS centers offer free testing and DOTS for indigent patients. For purposes of sustainability those who could afford to pay are encouraged to give an amount. A DOTS package for six months would cost from P1,200 to P2,500. Sputum test is P150, a skin test P20. PhilHealth package is available. Call the PTSI DOTS Center in the QI compound on E. Rodriquez (España) Avenue at tel. 7813761 to 65, local 170.)



IT TOOK THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD for TB patient Joel Alluson (seated) to heal. At his home in Tatalon, Quezon City, he's surrounded by a caring support group, his wife and neighbors, Dr. Violeta Perez, barangay volunteer Iluminada Basilio and microscopist Alwin Kalaw.

CERES DOYO

IN THE KNOW

TB 6th leading cause of death

TUBERCULOSIS (TB) IS STILL CONSIDERED a global emergency. Today, one-third of the world's population is infected and every year, approximately 2 million people, including 170,000 children, die of the disease.

The Philippines ranks eighth among 22 high-burden countries that account for 80 percent of the world's TB cases. In the Western Pacific region, the Philippines ranks second and loses P8 billion annually to the disease.

TB kills 75 Filipinos every day and is the sixth leading cause of death in the country. The problem continues to surge with about 250,000 new cases each year and approximately 500,000 infectious cases annually.

In the Philippines, one of every four persons with TB symptoms resorts to self-medication and half of them do not seek medical attention. Those who go to private physicians are not easy to follow up on. Some private medical practitioners may have regimens that do not conform to new treatment standards.

With the high cost of medication these days, many patients fail to complete their anti-TB regimen. Poverty and social stigma hamper TB cure, making TB tougher to control. Patients who fail to comply with the regimen could develop a resistant form of TB that is difficult and expensive to cure. —*Excerpted from a PTSI DOTS report*

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Stay in closet, don't sway hips ...

From page A1

or risk losing their jobs.

"If they sway their hips while marching or if they engage in lustful conduct, I think that will be cause for their dismissal from the force for conduct unbecoming an officer," PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said.

Pagdilao said the PNP did not discriminate against homosexuals, but warned it would not hesitate to fire those who misbehave.

"As an institution, the PNP does not look at or interfere with one's sexual preference," Pagdilao told radio station dzXL.

"But it does look at its members' conduct. If they behave within the norm, I don't think we'll have a problem. I recommend that they stay in the closet," he said.

Deeper into closet

Even so, Pagdilao stressed that he had not heard of any policeman who was a homosexual.

Still, Pagdilao's statements did not sit well with Danton Remoto, chair of Ang Ladlad, a group representing lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people that was recently refused registration as a party-list group for the May elections on the grounds that it does not have nationwide chapters.

"Statements like that only deepen the stereotype of gay men. Not all gay men are limp-wristed or sway their hips when they walk. Those statements will only drive homosexuals deeper into the closet. It's negative because we are encouraging them to come out and live more fruitful lives," Remoto said.

Under the 1998 National Police Code, no policeman or policewoman can be denied employment or fired from the police force for being gay or lesbian. *Alcuin Papa*

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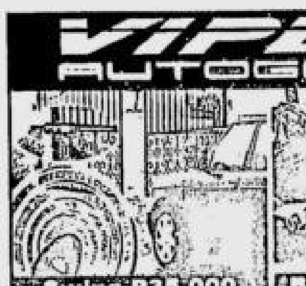
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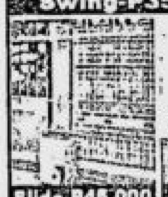
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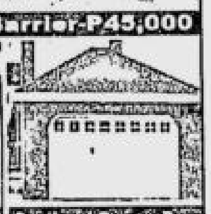
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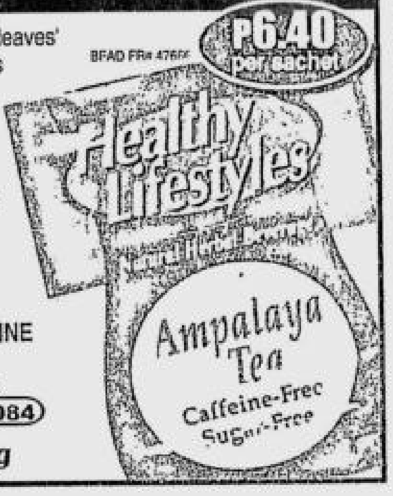

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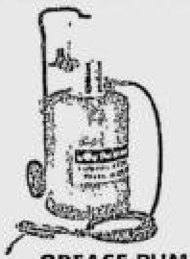
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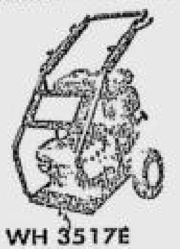
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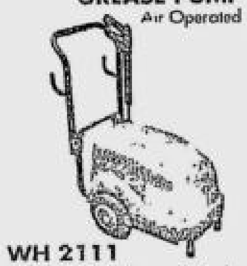
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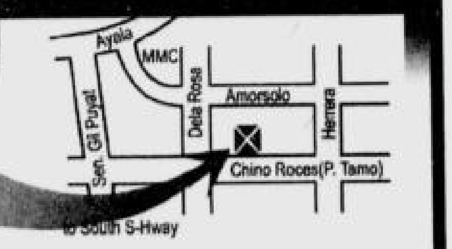

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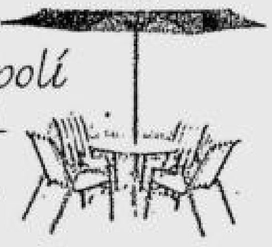
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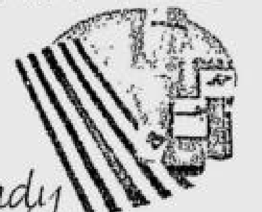
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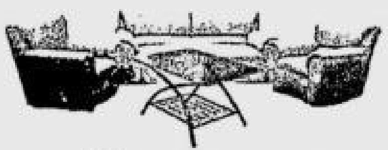
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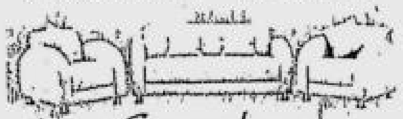
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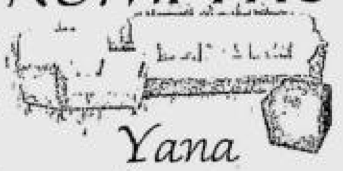
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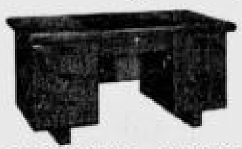
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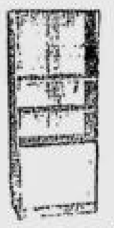
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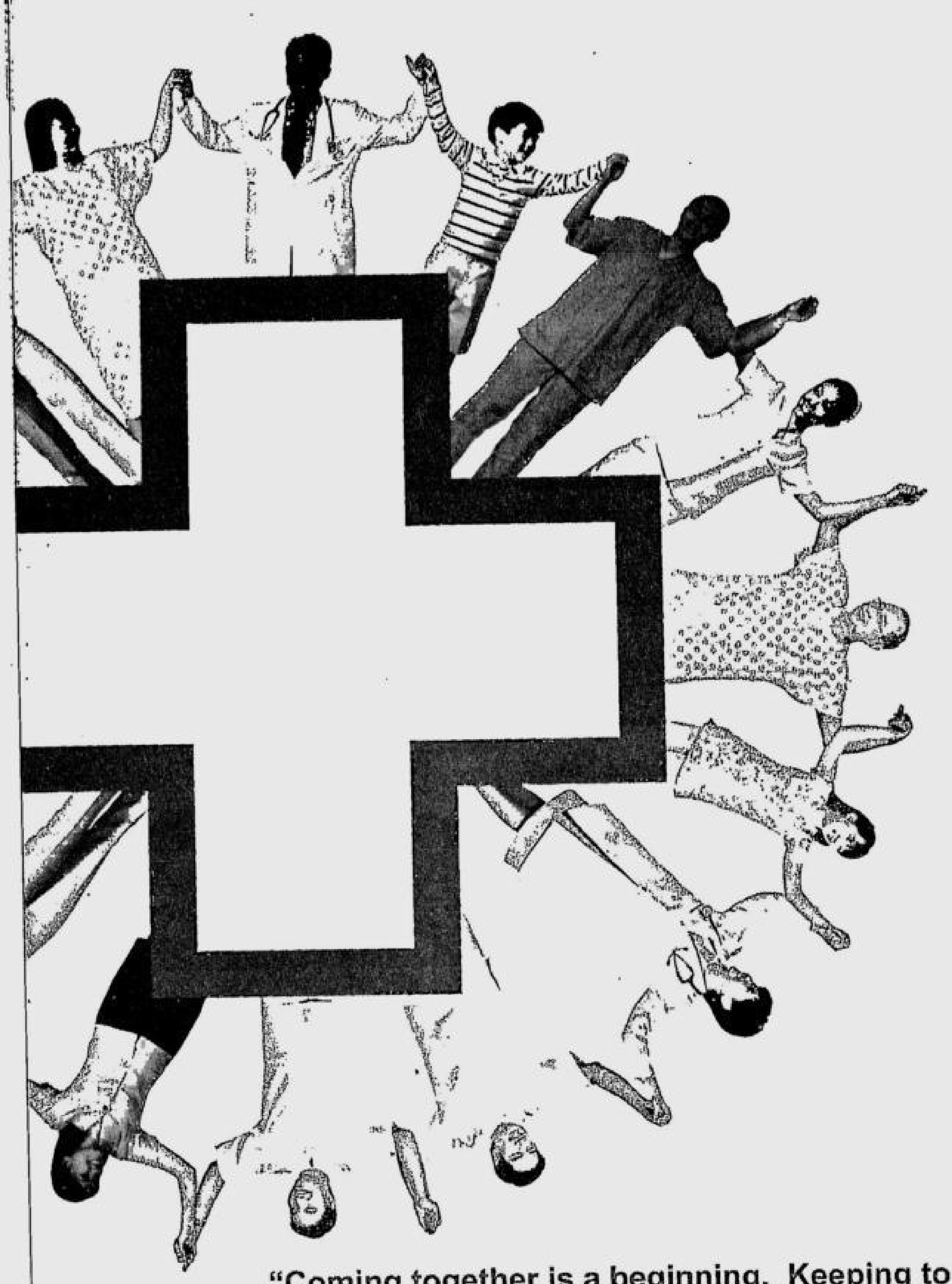

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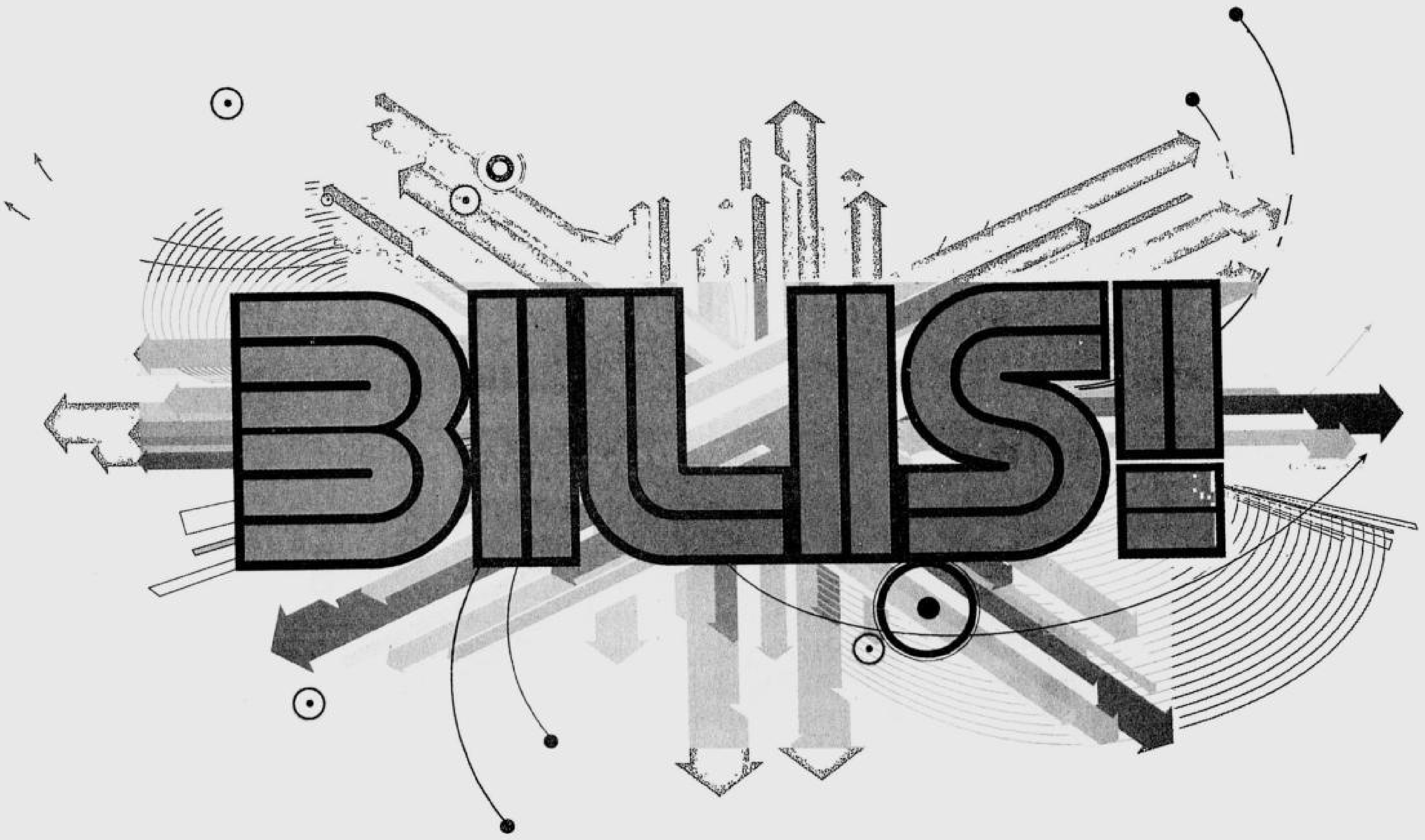

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Arroyo approves trillion-peso budget

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERday signed the country's P1.126 trillion national budget for 2007, ending two years of government operating on reenacted budgets.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. announced the signing of the new budget in an election year, saying the President ditched the traditional signing ceremony attended by leaders of the Senate and the House and signed the 1,162-page Republic Act No. 9401 "in her study without fanfare."

Ms Arroyo, in an interview after her roundtable discussion in Malacañang, said she vetoed some items which she will discuss in her State of the Nation Address at the joint opening of the 14th Congress in July.

Andaya echoed his boss' favorite mantra—describing the budget as as "social payback to the people for the fiscal turnaround of their government."

"The new initiatives are diverse as they will be felt on the ground," Andaya said in a statement.

"This budget will enable us to provide free meals to 1.5 million youngsters as incentive for attending class, recruit 3,000 new policemen, send about 700,000 scholars to schools and colleges, immunize two million children, establish 2,400 outlets of Botika ng Barangay, and provide medical insurance to 4.4 million poor persons, among others," Andaya said.

He said the budget would "cure underspending, spur growth, fund infrastructure and finance human development in a manner that will be transparent."

Andaya said that this being an election year, the biggest increase was given to the Commission on Elections which will receive P5.13 billion for the holding of the May 14 senatorial and local elections.

Andaya said all departments will get an increase, with the Department of Education getting the lion's share with P128.6 billion or P15.4 billion more than last year's budget. The DepEd budget includes P2.05 billion for the hiring of 16,390 new teachers and P5.37 billion to build 7,326 classrooms.

The rest of the Top 10 departments in terms of allocations are:

- Public works, P71.2-billion allocation or P28.7 billion bigger than last year; budget includes the construction or upgrading of 3,251 kilometers of roads and 1,312 flood control systems.
- Defense, P54.3 billion
- Interior and local government, P51.3 billion
- State universities and colleges, P17.3 billion
- Agriculture, including the AFMA (Agricultural ad Fisheries Modernization Fund), P17.3 billion
- Transportation, P16.9 billion
- Health, P11.5 billion
- Judiciary, P9.3 billion
- Comelec, P9.17 billion

By sector, economic services including agriculture, trade and natural resource will get 21.8 percent of the budget while social services, consisting of health and education spending, will get 28.1 percent. General public services account for 16.2 percent, defense, 4.8 percent, and debt service, 28.3 percent.

Andaya said interest payment is on the decline to P303 billion this year from the 2006 level of P309 billion, "a trend that will be sustained in the years to come." He said interest payments would further dip this year if the peso continues to strengthen against the US dollar.

By expenditure, Andaya said MOOE or maintenance and other operating expenses, make up bulk of the budget, requiring P659.2 billion, or 58.5 percent of total programmed expenditures. He said the amount already includes the debt service fund.

The other big-ticket item in this cluster is the Internal Revenue Allotment, or local government share from national taxes, of P183.9 billion.

Personal services, or the amount for payroll and pension contributions of active government employees and pension of veterans and retirees, will eat up 29.78 percent of the budget or P335.3 billion.

The P1.126 trillion budget is based on government revenue projections of P1.118 trillion and a budget deficit target of P63 billion. The President promised to achieve a balanced budget in 2008.

The budget also includes a P10 billion fund to rehabilitate Bicol and other areas hit by powerful typhoons last year, according to reelectionist Sen. Joker Arroyo, who was campaigning in the region yesterday.

TEAM UNITY senatorial candidates Vicente Sotto III, Tessie Aquino-Oreta and Luis "Chavit"Singson shake hands with well-wishers upon arrival in Legazpi City.

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1 of 2 families considers itself poor, says SWS

ONE OUT OF TWO HOUSEHOLD HEADS IN THE country considers his family poor, according to a recent survey by the Social Weather Stations.

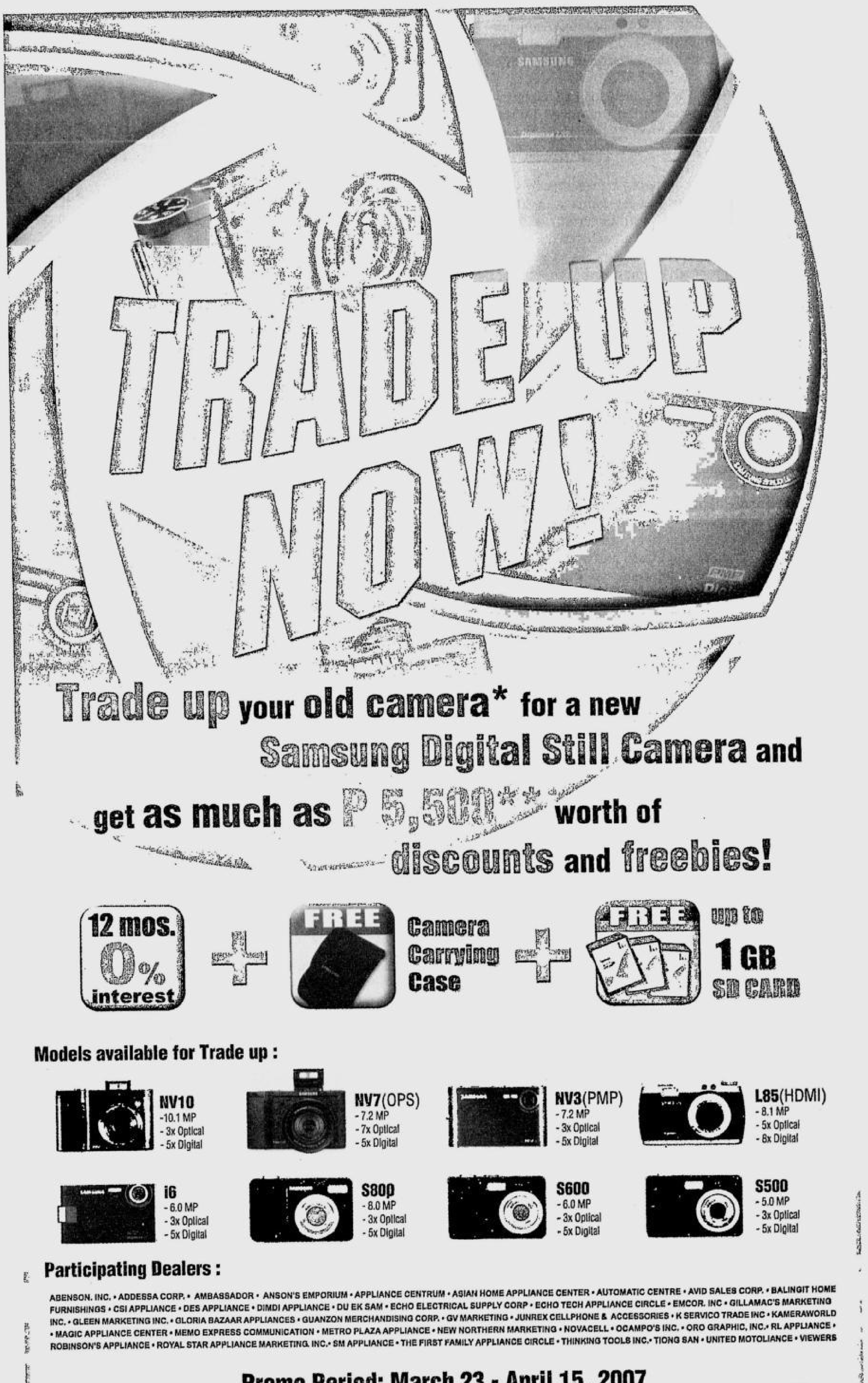
The figure (53 percent) is barely unchanged from the 51 percent reached in September last year, the SWS said. Self-rated poverty hit 59 percent in June last year before dropping 8 points to 51 percent in the next survey.

The First Quarter Social Weather Survey conducted in Feb. 24 to 27 also found that four in 10 families (39 percent) also considered themselves "food-poor" and that household heads' reports about their own poverty in general, their own food-poverty and their hunger were "internally consistent," the SWS said in a statement released yesterday.

In Metro Manila, self-rated poverty declined by 15 points to 39 percent in February, from 54 percent in November. Self-Rated food poverty also dropped 14 points to 31 percent from 45 percent in November.

Self-rated poverty declined in Metro Manila despite the increase of hunger in the area (to 20.7 percent in February from 17.7 percent in November). SWS attributed this to "belt-tightening" among people in the metropolis.

The people in Metro Manila "just lowered their standards so as not to be called poor," said Leo Larosa of SWS. "Perceptions on being poor or not poor are easy to change. What the people of Metro Manila did was that they lowered their standards, even if some of them had actually gone hungry," he added. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*



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Statesman

IN THIS ERA, WHEN DODGING ACCOUNTABILITY by any means, fair or foul, has become an ordinary occurrence, the recent order of the Supreme Court dismissing a Court of Appeals justice for inefficiency and misconduct is, to be sure, a cause for relief.

EDITORIAL

Last Tuesday, the Supreme Court fired Court of Appeals Justice Elvi John Asuncion on two counts. The first was for gross ignorance of the law; and the second, for delaying the resolution of motions for reconsideration filed before his division. Asuncion had actually been cleared of another charge—receiving bags of money—by the Supreme Court. But when he extended a TRO (temporary restraining order) he had previously issued, he stepped out of bounds. A Supreme Court's rule says that the Court of Appeals may issue a TRO only for a fixed period of 60 days. No extensions. Strike one.

Another Supreme Court rule is that there's a 90-day period for resolving motions for reconsideration. Asuncion failed to resolve 71 motions for reconsideration and resolved 179 others beyond the prescribed time limit. Strike two.

Strike three was on the 82 cases Asuncion had left unresolved beyond the 12-month period prescribed by the Constitution. Indeed, there were 409 other cases he had decided—but only after the one-year period prescribed by the Constitution.

Asuncion tried to defend his poor performance by saying that the Court of Appeals was reorganized in 2004. For which reason things were in an uncertain state of flux and so topsy-turvy he was prevented from doing his job.

The Supreme Court replied that most of the motions for reconsideration Asuncion had failed to attend to were filed years before the reorganization took place.

But it was the case in which Asuncion illegally extended his own TRO—a case involving the Philippine National Bank—that practically did him in. The Supreme Court said Asuncion's behavior in relation to that case constituted serious misconduct that justified his dismissal from service. The case had dragged on for five years.

In the words of the high court, "Such failure to follow basic legal commands embodied in the law and the Rules constitutes gross ignorance of the law, from which no one is excused, and surely not a judge .... While a judge is presumed to act with regularity and good faith in the performance of judicial functions, a blatant disregard of the clear and unmistakable provisions of a statute, as well as Supreme Court circulars enjoining strict compliance therewith, upends this presumption and subjects the magistrate to administrative sanctions."

Justice delayed, as we all know, is justice denied. Supreme Court Justice Reynato Puno seems passionate about this principle and is bent on tackling this in the best way someone in his position can: by doing everything, within the powers of the high court, to press on with the momentum created by his predecessors. Asuncion was dismissed on the basis of previous court circulars. In response to the epidemic of extrajudicial killings, the Chief Justice ordered the establishment of special courts to speedily attend to and dispatch those cases. In the wake of accusations that electoral protests end up being dragged out—and that decisions on those cases are normally sold to the highest bidder—Chief Justice Puno created a special committee to come up with recommendations that should close the windows of opportunities for judicial corruption.

The slow pace of the judicial system can make it an ally of fraud. When an election dispute takes so long to resolve, even a decision that goes against the "victor" is usually handed out at a time when the disputed term is about to expire, thus the beneficiary of the whole process is still the official who cheated in the elections.

The Chief Justice has already warned that our country can ill afford another tainted national elections. He is actually doing something to ensure that the judiciary delivers justice, and doesn't get bogged down in inaction, which can only result in discrediting not only the judiciary but also the entire democratic process. To our mind, this is statesmanship.

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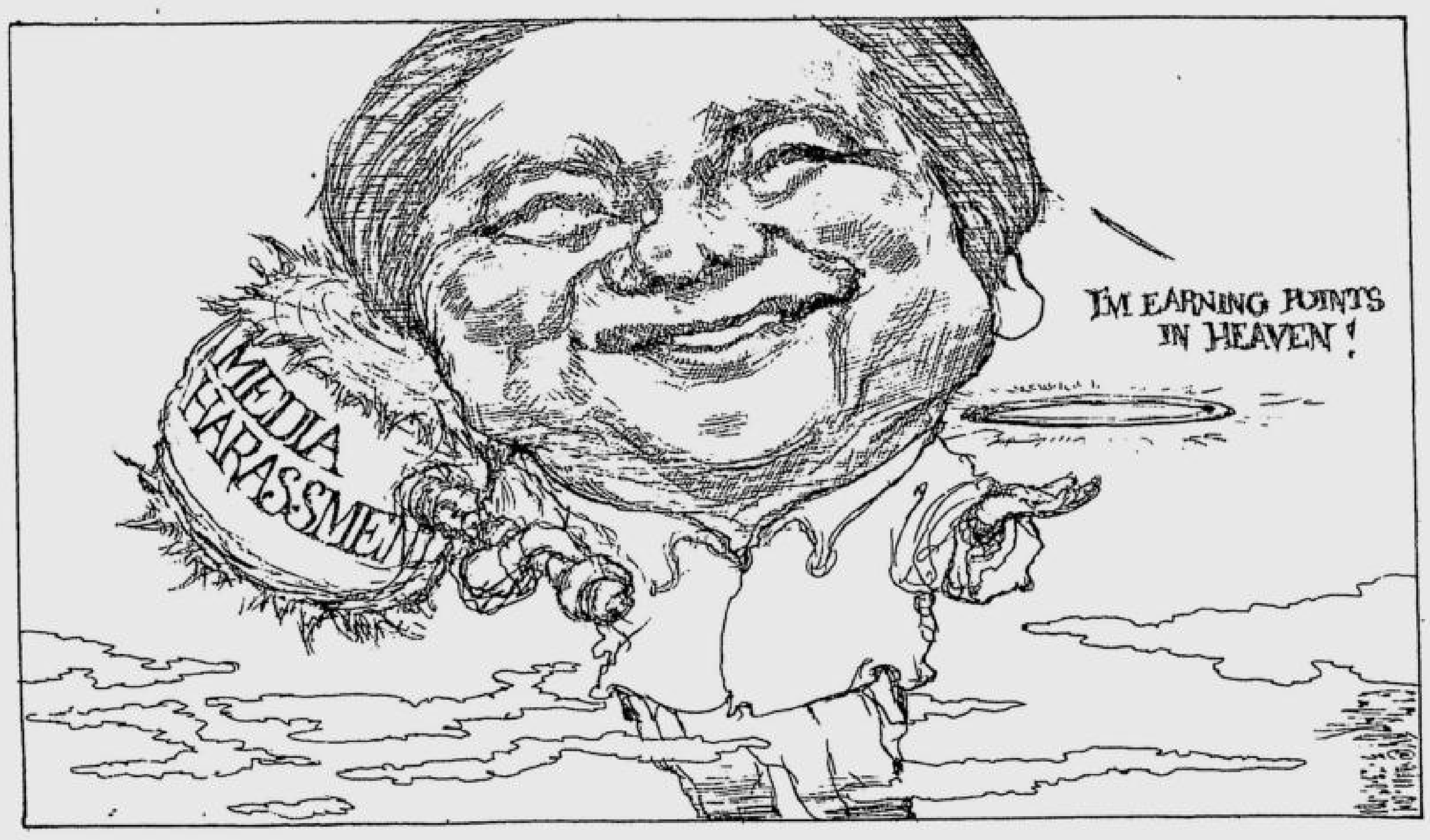

MEDIA HARASSMENT
I'M EARNING POINTS IN HEAVEN!

Sharing the loot with the gov't

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

AN INDICATION OF HOW LOW SOME FILipinos regard the Philippine government is the case of a retired lieutenant general of the Armed Forces of the Philippines who tried to buy off ill-gotten wealth charges against him by offering to share his loot with the government. Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot—a former comptroller of the AFP, accused of amassing P135.28 million in ill-gotten wealth—in a formal proposal to the Office of the Special Prosecutor, had the gall to offer to the government almost P21 million of his assets in exchange for the withdrawal of the charges against him and his family. The offered assets consisted of vehicles, real estate, a condominium unit in Fort Bonifacio and real properties in California.

That's how low some people look at our government after the Presidential Commission on Good Government offered to drop the ill-gotten wealth cases against the Marcoses on condition that they share their loot with the government. If it's good enough for the Marcoses, it should also be good for us, the others accused of similar crimes must be thinking. The offer conjures images of thieves sharing their stolen loot with the policemen who caught them in exchange for being set free.

Early this week, Charlie "Atong" Ang, co-accused of former President Joseph Estrada in a plunder case, got off with a two-year prison sentence instead of a possible 40-year jail term, by offering to return P25 million, part of the P130 million in tobacco excise taxes he allegedly "delivered" to Estrada.

Is this now a policy of the Arroyo administration? Share the loot with us and we will let you go. No wonder public officials are now into large-scale theft and kleptocracy. The bigger the loot, the bigger the share of the administration. Jocelyn Bolante is only the tip of the iceberg. Many more are buried under the ice, still hidden from view.

By the way, shouldn't the case against Ligot be plunder, considering that his alleged ill-gotten wealth is more than P50 million? And shouldn't the assets of other former AFP comptrollers also be investigated? Ligot's successor, former AFP comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, is facing charges of plunder and perjury for allegedly amassing P300 million in ill-gotten wealth. The comptroller controls the hundreds of millions of AFP funds. The temptation is too great.

* * *

Is the migration of overseas Filipino workers a recent phenomenon? Answer: No. Filipinos have been going to other countries to work and settle for the last 400 years. In fact, there are thriving Filipino communities in countries where a big number of them have settled there. The exodus became a flood only during and after the Marcos regime because of poverty and the lack of job opportunities here.

There are two books published recently which trace the migration of Filipinos to Mexico and the United States and to Australia. The first is by journalist Floro Mercene, titled "Manila Men in the New World," published by the University of the Philippines Press. The second is "Brown Americans of Asia," written by Renato Perdon (a Sydney-based Filipino historian), and published by The Manila Prints of Sydney.

It took Mercene 20 years to cobble up his book. He did it after doing a lot of research in many libraries in the United States, and after talking to Mexican scholars and historians and American scholars. He traveled extensively to Mexico to get information. The book is written in a casual, anecdotal manner, highlighting how the Philippines and Mexico have influenced each other. As it turns out, the migration of Mexicans to the Philippines was as pervasive as the Filipino migration to Mexico.

Proceeding from the premise that the Filipino diaspora is at least 400 years old, "Manila Men" reveals for the first time the fate—the adventures and misadventures—of Filipinos who migrated to Mexico and the Americas from the 16th century to the 18th century.

The vehicle for the mostly unintentional migration was the famed Manila galleons which traveled between Manila and Acapulco for almost 250 years (1570 to 1815) to carry on Spain's trade monopoly in the Pacific. One hundred galleons were built in the Philippines during this period, with Filipino natives serving as workers and crew members.

Invariably, they jumped ship upon reaching California to escape the hardships on board or settled down in Mexico to marry local girls and raise families. Many of the Filipinos ended up in Chile and Peru; others spread out in the United States. The oldest and biggest Filipino colony thrived in New Orleans, Louisiana. A small Filipino colony existed outside San Francisco when the Gold Rush occurred in 1849 and, most surprisingly, many Filipinos enlisted in the Union Army during the US Civil War.

"Brown Americans" narrates that Filipinos began migrating to tiny Thursday Island on the northernmost tip of Queensland, Australia in 1898. Thursday Island had the biggest supply of world-class pearl-shells in the world and "pearl-shelling" became a lucrative industry not only for the island but also for Australia. But there was a shortage of good pearl divers so Australia imported divers from the Philippines and the Malay Peninsula. The adventurous Filipinos were fearless, daring, responsible and fatalistically brave; and they could dive deeper than the white divers. Moreover, they accepted lower wages than the white men. A number of Filipinos died while diving.

The Filipinos played a major role in the Australian pearl industry not only as divers, crew members and supervisors but also as employers and owners of fishing fleets. As a consequence of the popularity of the Filipino divers, a small Filipino community emerged in Thursday Island.

McCarthyist déjà vu

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

WHY REHASH OLD CHARGES AGAINST Satur Ocampo, no matter that he had been cleared of similar charges in earlier judicial proceedings, no matter that witnesses, tainted and under duress to start with, claim to have seen him in meetings which were held at a time when he was actually in jail as a political detainee?

It is to neutralize the Alston and Melo Commission reports implicating the government in the extrajudicial killings of Left-wing activists, and place Bayan Muna, now leading the party-list polls, on the defensive. It isn't that we are naïve enough to buy the government's defense ("Don't look at us! It's they who have their killing fields.") lock, stock and barrel.

For Malacañang, it is enough that we be reminded that, once upon a time, in the mid-1980s, it was indeed the underground Left that went on an extermination campaign that decimated its own ranks. That is the message to the United Nations, as it considers the Alston report. That is the message to the Filipino voter, as he goes to the polls.

But that was not the message that we got from the early dawn transfer of Ocampo. The use of a private jet should alarm us even more; Bush's "war against terror" has relied on the infamous practice of "extraordinary rendition," wherein suspects are transported to other states in order to be tortured. In almost all the documented cases, they were similarly spirited out in the dark through private jets, and the uncanny resemblances are eerie.

The Arroyo government has upped the ante, so to speak, in the counter-insurgency campaign. It is asking the parliamentary Left to disown its underground comrades, disavow the armed struggle and embrace the rule of law. In doing so, it has also upped the ante for themselves, for in draping themselves in the flag, Malacañang perforce must first abide by the flag's and the Constitution's highest values. US Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson said it more eloquently: "We must never forget that the record on which we judge [the defendant] today is the record on which history will judge us tomorrow. To pass [the defendant] a poisoned chalice is to put it to our own lips as well."

The brazen attempt to shanghai an alleged Maoist and jump the gun on a Supreme Court hearing is now of public notoriety. What the public may not be aware of was what awaited Ocampo in Hilongos, Leyte. On Monday morning, the town was crawling with military men, in groups of three to five, stationed in various points, with anti-communist placards posted in public places.

My former student at the UP College of Law, lawyer Nery Colmenares, himself a party-list candidate of Bayan Muna, traveled personally to Hilongos to file the motion to stay the transfer of Ocampo. Nery, now a lawyer, was a torture victim and political prisoner under martial law. He found the Regional Trial Court surrounded by at least 20 fully armed men of the Philippine National Police, who later set up a checkpoint to screen people entering the court. After Nery secured the stay order and left the court, he was tailed all the way to the town of Baybay; he didn't feel safe until he reached Cebu later that evening.

The Palace has explained that the deployment of uniformed men in urban centers, especially slum communities, is part of their counter-insurgency work, and under that cover, may perhaps hope to intimidate voters against voting opposition in the May polls.

Unwittingly, it may actually confirm an entirely different legal result: the application of common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Protocol II on Non-International Armed Conflicts. It will subsume the Philippines—already under scrutiny by the UN and the European Union—under the even more careful eye of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva. It will enable international humanitarian groups to give aid to those displaced or hurt during the conflict.

These treaties—all of which the Philippines has solemnly signed—do not apply to mere "internal disturbances and tensions [like] isolated and sporadic acts of violence," but the moment the regular armed forces are called in—not just the police—that is a telltale, one of the authoritative indicia, that the situation has crossed the threshold into an "armed conflict." And that is what Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her cohorts may have just done.

The renewed McCarthyism must end. But when the "Red scare" is over, the frenzy is dissipated and the elections are behind us, it will then behoove the high priests of the Filipino underground Left to make a clean breast of that dark episode in their history, when dedicated comrades were sacrificed and innocent blood was shed. What the Arroyo regime's latest maneuvers merely prove is that the Right-wing McCarthyist witch hunt is not the answer to the Stalinist "show trials," but it shouldn't condone, it cannot gloss over, it must not erase, the injustice that was committed to the victims of the Left-wing purges.

We must cast off that albatross around our necks, before we can sit down to craft a progressive agenda for our people. Activists of my generation will remember the chant, "Marcos, Hitler, Diktador, Tuta!" The younger generation will have to find a better chant that rhymes with Gloria, but even more, they must dream new dreams beyond the calcified orthodoxies that ideologues of varying hues have offered.

* * *

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

Diplomatic 'Mission Impossible'

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

BUFFETED BY THE INTERNATIONAL STORM over the extrajudicial killings and the heavy-handed police action in the arrest of political dissidents, and by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy survey finding the Philippines the most corrupt country in Asia, the administration has sought to shift the focus on the "plus points" of economic gains.

President Macapagal-Arroyo in a series of public statements during the past many days, refused to acknowledge the "negative" issues, and instead refocused the debate to her economic performance.

The other day, the Department of Foreign Affairs mobilized the entire foreign service in a diplomatic offensive to "project the good news regarding our economic progress" to counter the bad publicity the country was getting. Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, in a three-day seminar, outlined to the country's diplomats in 69 countries the achievements of the administration's economic projects. On the political and security side, Romulo said "we need a consistent message on the issue of unexplained killings and human rights to balance anti-Philippine propaganda."

The assembled diplomats appeared overwhelmed by and uneasy over the mission Romulo assigned. The new assignment was the toughest they have ever received under the Arroyo presidency. It was nearly "Mission Impossible."

It will be so for as long as the killings are not stopped, and so long as the police and the military continue with their excessive application of force in their counter-insurgency campaign, because the diplomats will have no weapons to counter this cyclonic barrage of bad policy arising from the relentless pressures put on the administration to stop the killings, prosecute those responsible for the murders and control military and police abuses in the counter-insurgency.

These pressures have intensified from the US Congress, the State Department, the United Nations and the European Union. The DFA's diplomatic offensive is primarily directed at the centers of Western democracies, which are also the main sources of economic aid to the Philippines and military aid to the Philippine security forces. The Filipino diplomats will be subjected to humiliating embarrassment when they argue the case for the Philippines' economic performance, which has been found by academic studies to have achieved only mediocre results whose benefits have not trickled down to the poorer segments of the population.

The heaviest cross the diplomats will have to bear is the President herself and her impotence in using the presidential powers at her command, particularly the power to leash security forces to stop their abuses. Whatever diplomatic effort they would exert is likely to be cancelled by the President's response to the pressures for her to take action on the human rights abuses. The President's non-recognition and denial of these issues are the biggest obstacle to the diplomats—obstacles with the weight of an iron ball chained around their necks.

Thus, on the international front, the focus on the economic "plus points" is unlikely to "balance" the bad publicity arising from the security and political issues. When this escapist approach is applied on the home front by projecting the economic "plus points" on the local screen, the projection will be inadequate to wipe out the self-generated bad publicity emanating from the human rights violations.

In asking the Filipino public to look the other way when abuses are taking place, the President is resurrecting the old game played by dictators and authoritarians who offered bread in exchange for liberty. She has virtually been saying, forget political rights and think about the economy which is producing benefits for you. This a crude reinvention of the classic trade-off between bread and freedom. The modified version, however, coming from the ranks of the business community, is that there's an overdose of democracy that immobilizes economic initiatives.

Those who echo this view point to the record of success of the Asian "tiger economies" (South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand), claiming that these were in the 1960s and 1970s, under varying degrees of authoritarian rule. This authoritarian-democracy paradigm as mutually exclusive has been found fatally flawed by academic studies. For the moment, let me just point out that President Arroyo's bread-democracy trade-off scheme is atrociously unfair and one-sided, making it almost a con game. She has already taken so much out of democracy but has not given enough bread to compensate for the loss.

Look at the record on this trade-off: The Gross Domestic Product has been struggling during the past decade to break out of the 5-percent annual growth rate. According to Filipino economists, the growth rate has to increase to two digits to be able to have a significant "filter down" impact to lower the level of poverty. From the point of view of employing generation, a sector that gives relief to poorer classes, a report released by the National Statistics Office said: "The unemployment rate recorded in January 2007, which is 7.8 percent, is not significantly different (from) last year's estimate of 8.1 percent."

More telling is the statistics that the number of jobless workers actually rose from 2.837 million last year, to 2.85 million this year. "That is, there were 13,000 more jobless people this year compared to a year ago," says the report. A recent Social Weather Stations survey found that nearly one in five Filipino families experienced hunger at least once in the last three months. The incidence of hunger remained at a record high 19 percent from November.

VAW in Afghanistan and here

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WE WERE TALKING ABOUT WHAT GOVERNments could do in response to the growing problem of violence against women with some women from Afghanistan when one of the Filipinas asked: "Do you have any shelters for battered women?"

"Shelters are very controversial in Afghanistan," replied Homa Sabri, senior national program officer for Unifem in that country. "Bringing a survivor to a shelter could prove more dangerous for a woman. She might never be able to return to her home or even her village. She would be labeled."

Thus were our eyes opened to the realities that women confronted in Afghanistan, where conventional approaches to addressing violence against women—approaches that have proven effective elsewhere—may not always succeed in a culture where women have such a long way to go before attaining full equality in life as well as in law.

The Philippines, through the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) and the UP Center for Women Studies Foundation, played host to a mission of Afghan officials who were in the country to learn strategies on the promotion of a National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (Napwa). The mission was headed by Hussn Bano Ghazanfar, Minister for Women's Affairs, and was composed of high-level officials. Their aim was to "learn from their Filipino counterparts the ways and means by which (Filipinos) ensured the implementation of the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (PPGD)."

That was why I was part of the session—to share experiences in "advocating for and setting women's agenda" through the media. Other speakers that afternoon included Ruby Palma Beltran, who spoke on the implementation of the PPGD at the local government level, in her case, in Quezon City; and Eden Parot of the Women's Crisis Center, who spoke on government and NGO collaboration in addressing issues of violence against women.

* * *

WHILE there is one "safe house" for women survivors of violence in three provinces in Afghanistan, said Sabri, both government bodies and NGOs are searching for alternative approaches. One of these is the establishment of an effective working relationship among the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the police, and the Ministry of Justice in preventing, responding to and prosecuting cases of violence against women, particularly rape and domestic violence.

Progressive legislation on women's rights has also been initiated, an example of which is the "decree on forced marriage" that has classified forced marriage as a violation of a woman's human rights.

As for the media, the Afghan panel complained that their media are dominated by "political and business interests," that bring their own partisan bias to their coverage of political and social issues; and, sadly, gender issues do not enjoy a particularly high priority. Dr. Aziz Ahmad Panjsheri, a member of the High Council for the Press and connected with the Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Tourism, promised during the session that he would do all he could to provide air time and space to the coverage of gender concerns.

* * *

PERHAPS a good example of networking for advocacy is the declaration by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines of March as "A Month of Prayer and Peace for the Filipino Family" in observance of Women's Month.

The WCC approached Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales last month for a pastoral letter on violence against women. The cardinal referred the request to CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo who promptly issued an "exhortation" to be read during Sunday Masses in parishes around the country for the entire month. The letter is significant in that it marks the first public recognition by the Church leadership of the existence of violence within the home and family, something previous Church leaders had sought to soften, if not deny.

Here are excerpts from that letter:

As the country celebrates National Women's Month ... we are reminded to pray for all women who have been, and are, victims of all kinds of abuse and violence within the family and outside their homes ... it is a day to remember our Filipino women, especially those who nurtured us since we were born—our very own mothers.

We are aware that many of our women have become victims of violence, especially in their own homes. It is a sad reality that this is happening in our country. The home is supposed to be a sanctuary where peace and love reign, but many of our homes now are becoming a venue where women are battered and abused.

* * *

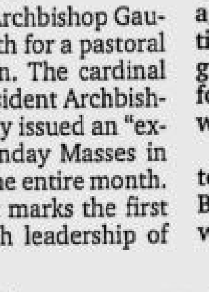
THE CBCP exhorts the various sectors of our society to link hands to protect our women from exploitation of all kinds, from violence that reduces them to silence, and from abuse that deprives them of their dignity as persons. Many of those who have fallen victims remain silent and are unable to move ahead because of fear and hurt, while just as many are slowly finding the courage to go on living their lives. We call on our brothers and sisters, both in government and the private sector, to lend help and services to our women in crises.

May we indeed make this month dedicated to women a month of prayer. As we pray for our Filipino women, we also pray that peace may reign in the Filipino family. Let us pray that our women get the respect and love they deserve. Let us pray that exploitation and violence against women stop. Let us pray that those victimized by violence may find the courage to forgive and get on with their lives. Let us also pray for the enlightenment and conversion of those who inflict violence on women.

Let us also recommend our Filipino women to the protection and intercession of Our Blessed Mother Mary, the model and icon of womanhood.

New questions about Rizal

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

EACH YEAR, WHEN I NOTICE THE BEAUTIFUL orange carpets that form under blooming narra trees, I take an anti-histamine for my allergies and prepare myself for yet another round of commencement exercises. This is particularly striking at the Malacañang end of Mendiola Street in Manila, which is home to five educational institutions. When people see the carpet of narra blossoms, they know summer break is near.

It is comforting to know that in the midst of urban blight, the natural cycle of the universe continues despite the abuse we heap on nature and the environment. In another time and another context, when trees turned fiery red, it was believed that the Filipino head-hunting season had begun up north and lowlanders were warned not to stray too far into strange territory.

Having been invited to deliver three commencement speeches this year, I wondered if I had something sensible to say to the Class of 2007. A look at the past rather than the future. What message from the past would be relevant to young men and women who have their future ahead of them? Of course, one could turn to Jose Rizal and yet again torment students by his example. Textbook history tells us that he graduated from the Ateneo Municipal at the top of his class with the highest honors.

Rizal graduated with a Bachelor of Arts on March 14, 1877 and if we are to go through the subjects he took, these were: School year 1873-74: Greek, Latin, Spanish, Universal Geography; SY 1874-75: Latin, Spanish, Greek, Universal History, History of Spain and the Philippines, Arithmetic and Algebra; SY 1875-76: Rhetoric and Poetics, French, Geometry and Trigonometry; SY 1876-77: Philosophy, Mineralogy and Chemistry, Physics, Botany and Zoology. In all these subjects, he got the grade of "Sobresaliente" or "Excellent." If we are to convert this to a numeric grade, it will be, depending on the school, either 100, or 4 or flat 1.

Unfortunately, we often look at the above subjects and grades with hindsight. We should remember that the Ateneo Municipal of Rizal's time is not the same Ateneo de Manila University of our times. We should remember that when Rizal attended the Ateneo Municipal he was not a college student, although people referred to his school as a "colegio." Something is lost in translation here. What Rizal accomplished in the Ateneo was the equivalent of a high school diploma today. And if one really looks even closer, he may be surprised to discover that Rizal took further classes in the Ateneo in the school year 1877-78, that he was examined, and passed the examination leading to the title Agrimensor y Perito Tasador de Tierras. Before he enrolled in the University of Santo Tomas to take up medicine, he was by training and license a land surveyor!

For those who insist that Rizal graduated at the top of his class, I would recommend a visit to the Ateneo de Manila University Archives where the school annual and list of prizes for school year 1876-77 are kept.

Rizal did garner a "sobresaliente" in all of his subjects in addition to a number of special prizes, but was he the valedictorian of his class? This precious booklet shows that there were only 12 students who graduated that year. Their weighted academic average was printed and it is clear that of the 12 students, three had the grade of "Bueno" or "Good," and nine, including Rizal, had *sobresaliente*. What is the big deal about Rizal's *sobresaliente* if there were eight other boys in his batch with the same grade? Why do we all presume he was the brightest boy in class, when Rizal himself mentioned a certain Glicerio Anson as a student whom he admired for being better.

Now we come to the grades in the University of Santo Tomas. They are not as impressive as the Ateneo grades. In his first year in UST (SY 1877-78), Rizal took a preparatory course in theology and law that consisted of the following subjects: Cosmology, Metaphysics, Theodicy and the History of Philosophy. In all these, he was rated *sobresaliente*.

Then he proceeded to medicine, and his grades dipped. In the preparatory courses for Medicine 1878-79, he got *Aprovechado* in Advanced Physics and Advanced Natural History and *Sobresaliente* in Advanced Chemistry. In first year Medicine (1878-79), he took General Anatomy and Histology, Descriptive Anatomy, Exercises of Osteology and Dissection. In all these. he got the rating *Bueno*. In second year medicine (1879-80), he took Anatomy and Histology, Descriptive Anatomy, Exercises in Dissection, Physiology, Private and Public Hygiene, for all of which he got a rating of *Bueno*. In Third year (1880-81), he got *Aprobado* (that's a passing mark!) for General Pathology and Pathologic Histology. In Therapeutics, Medical Matter and Art of Prescribing, he got *Sobresaliente*; for Surgical Anatomy. Operations, External Medical Applications and Bandages, *Bueno*. Finally, on his fourth year (1881-1882): he was rated *Notable* in all these subjects: Medical Pathology, Surgical Pathology. Obstetrics, Illnesses of Women and Children, and Siphilography.

Since Rizal cannot be blamed for these grades, it has become traditional to blame UST and the Dominicans. Perhaps, we should realize that Rizal was, by talent and temperament, an artist and poet; a medical degree requires the use of another side of the brain. If he did take medicine to cure his mother's failing eyesight, wasn't it easier to just send her to a specialist? Old knowledge, new questions indeed.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

'Albularyo'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

LAST SUNDAY THE INQUIRER HAD A FULL-PAGE SPREAD featuring 10 medicinal plants endorsed by the Department of Health. The eye-catching feature, with colored photographs, brought back memories of my own forays into the world of the *albularyo*.

When I was still in college, back in the 1970s, I volunteered with the Rural Missionaries, a group of Catholic sisters that organized community-based health programs. As my graduation approached, I asked the sisters if I could continue to work with them after college. I had a feeling they didn't quite know what to do with a veterinarian and since I couldn't become a nun either, one of them came up with a brilliant idea: why not get me to research on medicinal plants?

I jumped on the chance, but without any illusions. I was a city creature, through and through, who knew next to nothing about plants. The first time I volunteered for work in a rural area, I gasped at the sight of a tree with wonderful flowers and asked the mayor's wife what the tree was.

It was her turn to gasp. Really now, how was I to know that mango trees produced flowers?

I had taken botany in college but could barely remember what pistils and stamens were. So to prepare myself for medicinal plants research, I signed up for a course in economic botany. That was a fascinating course, and I'm convinced, to this day, that if we could teach botany by pointing out the uses of different plants, students would probably remember much more of that subject.

'Plawel'

So, off I went to Mindanao, then to the Visayas, then to Luzon, to interview a few village "*albularyo*." That term is misleading though; it's a Spanish-Filipino word that means "herbalist." It came about because in Western countries, most medicinal plants are small herbs. I learned quickly that in a tropical country like the Philippines, our immense biodiversity offers us so many more diverse medicinal plants, from tiny herbs to towering forest trees.

Early on in the research, I realized too it wasn't just the *albularyo* who had information on medicinal plants. Every household had its own stocks of traditional medicine in their backyard, and generally, the older women knew how to pick out and prepare the plants.

They were also always ready to share what they knew. Within a few weeks, I had two field notebooks bulging with information.

Even back then, I could tell that folk knowledge about many medicinal plants was beginning to disappear. In one Ifugao village, a young student was assigned to accompany me out in the field to identify plants. After a few minutes, I realized she was identifying every other plant as "plawel," which I dutifully jotted down in my notebook—until I realized "plawel" was "flower." I was tempted to point at a mango tree with full blooms to ask her what it was.

After a few months of this kind of work, I realized, sorting through all the different plant names—whether Cebuano, Tagalog or Ilokano—there was really a small core of about 20 medicinal plants that were used throughout the country. I went back to Manila and read voraciously to get more information on these plants—from the classic "Medicinal Plants of the Philippines" (by Eduardo Quisumbing, published in the early 1950s) to Chinese pharmacology books.

I put the information together into a booklet with a rather fancy title: "Philippine Medicinal Plants in Common Use: Their Phytochemistry and Pharmacology." It was a rather technical book, but I'd like to think it helped to stimulate more interest in medicinal plants in our health programs. In the 1980s, an American non-profit group, World Neighbors, got me to produce less technical materials, consisting of posters and a slide presentation explaining the uses of medicinal plants.

Demystifying plants

The posters and slides were attempts to demystify the use of medicinal plants. The years of research on medicinal plants had made me realize there was so much of magic involved in using the plants. Take *pito-pito* as an example: that was 7 leaves of 7 plants put together for a general tonic. I'd imagine that if some Chinese-Filipino had developed that decoction, it would have been *walo-walo*, given the Chinese love of the number 8.

In recent years, commercial interests have contributed to further mystifying the plants with references to "phytochemicals," as if these were new discoveries. All that the word means is "plant chemicals," which scientists have been looking at for decades now.

An example of phytochemicals would be essential oils. A plant with a strong smell will have several of these oils, which can help to clear a congested nose, bring up the phlegm from the lungs, or, externally, help to relieve itchiness or heat. Sounds familiar? Yes, Vicks Vaporub is a mixture of those oils. *Yerba buena* ("the good herb"), one of the 10 medicinal plants endorsed by the DOH, is an example of a plant rich in essential oils.

The community-based health programs helped people to rediscover the plants, minus the magic. Communities came up with their own products like SLK Cough Syrup, made from *sampalok* leaves, *luya* (ginger) and *kalamansi*. ABC (*abukado, bayabas* and *kaimito*) leaves were used for diarrhea. There was even oil mixed with ginger and *sili* leaves and used as a balm for muscle pains, which, I'd advise people tongue-in-cheek, could also be used to season their food.

Nationalism, science

Looking back at those experiences, I do feel we need to go beyond SLK and ABC. I still keep hearing of research that ask the *albularyo* about the plants they're using, and I think that's such a waste of time. We know what they're using; the question is, what are we going to do with all that knowledge.

I squirm whenever I hear officials talking about medicinal plants as "cheap alternatives for the poor." There's more to the plants, and neighboring countries, knowing this, encourage local companies to develop medicinal plants. China has the most developed systems for medicinal plants and rich Chinese-Filipinos are known to fly to China, paying thousands of dollars for some of the traditional preparations.

I'm amazed to see Filipinos shelling out a thousand pesos for a bottle of imported mangosteen extract, for example. Or ordering *banaba* products from the United States for diabetes. *Banaba* is a tree with purple flowers that you find all over the country. Back in the 1950s, there were already local scientific articles about *banaba's* medicinal uses but no one seemed interested in taking them beyond research. Today, *banaba* isn't even in the government's list of endorsed plants.

If we were more nationalistic and more scientific about our medicinal plants, we'd probably have more than those 10 plants to offer. And if we don't get our act together, foreign companies are going to patent medicines from the plants and sell them back to us in fancy packages, at astronomical prices.

GMA now into selling RP shores?

I AM OUTRAGED BEYOND WORDS BY the news report that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo views with so much elation the imminent sale of a chunk of Panglao Island in Bohol to a Saudi Arabian royal family. (INQUIRER, 3/12/07)

Has the President gone mad? For as long as the 1987 Constitution is not amended or revised, its "National Patrimony" provisions remain in force and effect. Evidently, the President has given us another tangible reason to oppose her (reactionary) regime. The sale will deprive small fishermen and their families of their homes and access to food and livelihood.

Of course, the brilliant and shrewd legal yeomen of GMA will find ways to manipulate the National Patrimony provisions—perhaps, through a joint-venture agreement with Filipino corporations. But in reality, the latter will just be used as dummies of the foreign buyer.

It goes without saying that GMA does not consider the very poor communities that will be affected by the sale. With the rate GMA is going, soon enough the Philippines will no longer belong to Filipinos, and more and more of our countrymen will be rendered landless and homeless in their very own homeland.

Of course, it is no secret that the Arroyo administration has been a staunch advocate of the exploration and exploitation of the country's natural resources. This is clear from the continuously increasing presence of large-scale foreign mining concessions in the country. Anyway, common decency or *delicadeza* dictates that GMA should not be proudly bragging about the outright sale of public lands to foreigners, as she is doing now in the case of Panglao Island.

Encouraging the sale of public lands to aliens has the most serious, if not despicable, implications. By doing it, GMA is in effect making a public invitation for foreigners to bid for the rest of the country's shores, virgin forests (or at least whatever is left after mining) and islands.

—ANGELISA L. RAZO,
22B Aala Building,
Iñigo Street, Davao City,

Angara staunch defender of environment

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE news item "Elect eco-minded bets, says prelate." (INQUIRER, 3/20/07) According to the report, Manila Archbishop Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales called on the people to vote for ecology-minded candidates. In that same article, Sen. Edgardo J. Angara was branded one of the worst choices for environment advocates and unworthy of the green vote.

We couldn't agree more on the appeal to vote for eco-minded candidates. But we would like to take exception on the statement that Angara is among the worst choices for green voters.

Angara is the principal author of the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act which has secured the perpetual existence of the country's natural resources. Under the Nipas Act, there are at present 104 protected areas covering 3.33 million hectares. In the Senate, he has consistently voted for a total log ban and has always been a staunch supporter of the green technology. He co-sponsored the Biofuels Act to provide alternative sources of energy for the transport sector and continues to rally for the passage of the Renewable Energy Act to promote the development of renewable energy sources specifically in the electricity industry; and the National Cultural Heritage Act that seeks to preserve, conserve, enrich and protect the nation's historical and cultural heritage including marine and coastal resources.

The family has no logging interest in Aurora and anywhere else. Not many are aware that Aurora is the only province that has 70 percent forest cover, the highest in the country and has remained so for many years now.

Angara strongly believes that the country must move toward environment sensitivity and sustainable societies. He has bills and laws to his name to show this advocacy of his.

It is true that candidates should be chosen on the basis of their platforms, but it is as important that candidates should stand on the strength of their advocacy and not on the real or perceived weaknesses of other candidates.

—MINA PANGANDAMAN,
Office of Sen. Edgardo J. Angara,
RM 504, Senate of the Philippines,
GSIS Financial Center,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

'Grandma's wisdom' in elections

I DID NOT LIKE ELY DE LEON'S statement that INQUIRER columnist Antonio J. Montalvan II is a person "with limited views and of dark-age mentality." (INQUIRER, 3/13/07) But even though I found De Leon's letter in defense of pro-death legislators intolerable, I respect his right to think that Montalvan's "Pro-life, pro-death list" (INQUIRER, 2/26/07) did not treat the Filipino voting public well.

When people with a strong sense of history speak, it is wise to listen to them politely. Take, for instance, our grandmothers and elders whose common sense has been honed by their experiences with how things work and how people behave. They have seen almost all aspects of life up close. Unfortunately, today, shortsighted people consider their religious faith old-fashioned; and the educated and legalistic have only low regard for "grandma's wisdom."

My grandmother taught me many timeless truths. One of them is the beauty of a permanent, exclusive, divinely ordained love between a man and a woman. This truth will not change even if surveys show that the vast majority of human beings hold the contrary view.

Opinion polls do not change objective realities. Those promoting abortion, artificial contraception, euthanasia, divorce and same-sex marriage are going against the natural, moral law. Montalvan's column named the legislators who support anti-life and anti-family bills. But he also named the pro-life candidates who are cooperating to promote the good of all—and not just the good perceived by the majority of survey respondents. Whether or not pro-life candidates win elections, the essential truths will always remain the same. Just ask grandma.

—JOSE LEO LEMUEL
G. CAPARAS JR.,
11 Luis Sianghio St.,
1103 Kamuning, Quezon City

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US asking for impossible

INQUIRER.NET VOICES

"US SEEKS TOUGHER RP ACTION TO stop extrajudicial killings." (INQUIRER, 3/15/07) I say the US is asking for the impossible, especially considering that there are so many death squads.

Was there ever a time in world history when criminals were asked to stop from committing a crime and they actually stopped? No criminal has ever shown regret and remorse for his crime before he was caught and punished.—**Manuel Novilla, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (via e-mail)**

* * *

Of course, the US will ask for the scrapping of the proposed amendments to the IRR (implementing rules and regulations) of the Build-Operate-Transfer law. After all, it finances most of the studies that give US commercial interests an advantage, and which our bureaucracy swallows hook, line and sinker.

Today, there are many established Filipino-controlled or -managed businesses that can do unsolicited BOT proposals based on solid ground information with the national interest in mind. The bureaucracy only needs to be vigilant and to be taught the law's proper implementation.—**Ricardo Penson, Brisbane, Australia (via e-mail)**

* * *

Rep. Satur Ocampo would like to fool the Filipinos into believing that he is not capable of committing mass murder.

I pity him for being a dyed-in-the-wool communist and sycophant of Jose Maria Sison's. And he is the more pitiful as he clings to the arcane belief that communist rule can solve all the country's ills and bring the nation to prosperity and greatness.

Ocampo should be man enough to face his crimes. Certainly, history will judge him as one of the termites gnawing at the foundations of Philippine democracy.—**Wilson Caubat, Pildera II, Pasay City (via e-mail)**

* * *

In reference to the letter "Useless official trip to plead with the CGFNS" (INQUIRER, 3/9/07), the government never spent a single centavo for our trip. I paid for my own, so did the rest of the team.

I guess there's no harm in trying. At least, we were able to clarify matters with the CGFNS, which told us that if the media had not sensationalized the matter, it would have reached a different decision.

Let me say that I'm one of those affected by the sin of a few leaders of the nursing profession. I and my colleagues decided to fight for our licenses, knowing that we never participated in the cheating.—**Renato Aquino Jr., 100 Mariveles St., SMH, Quezon City (via e-mail)**

* * *

The call of Chief Justice Reynato Puno for a review of the court security system is laudable. Indeed, court officials and staff are exposed to dangers, especially from disgruntled litigants.

However, physical security is only one concern. Double-standard, long-delayed justice more effectively incites people to commit violence inside and outside the courts. This is to say that the expeditious and fair resolution of lawsuits will guarantee better and more reliable security for the judges and their staff.

On the other hand, purging our courts of scalawags—as our Supreme Court recently did when it upheld the dismissal of four Court of Appeals employees—will restore public trust in our justice system.—**James Tanaka, Davao City (via e-mail)**

* * *

"It was just a courtesy call," Vilma Santos said. "I hope it will not be misinterpreted. I went to see the officials of Iglesia ni Cristo just to pay my respects."

This is another "*trapo*" talking, and she's beginning to show her true colors.

Anybody who goes "*mano po*" to the INC is a turncoat and a coward, who is willing to do whatever is necessary just to get votes.—**Dante Faragas, San Francisco, California (via e-mail)**

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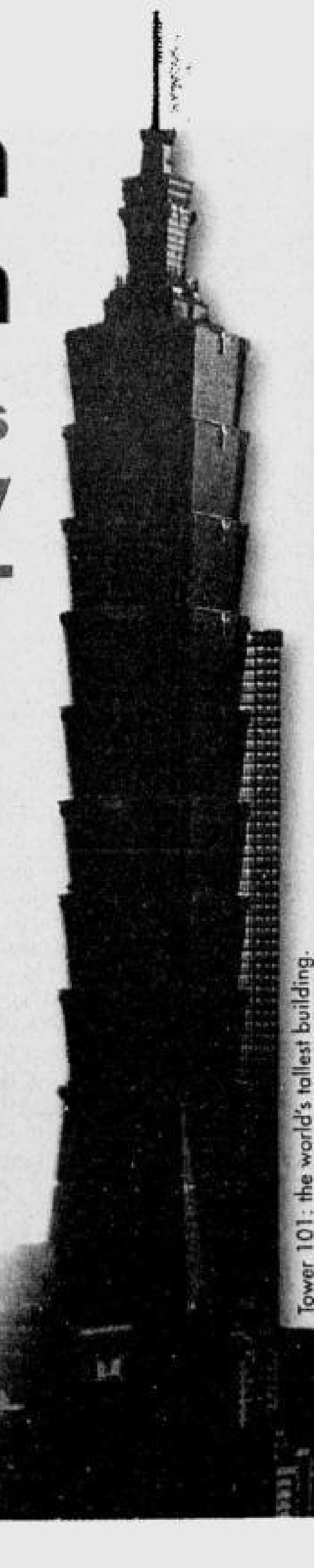
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Ebdane faces inclusion in plunder rap

By TJ Burgonio
in Manila and
Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

A LEFTIST FISHERMAN'S group said yesterday it would file an amended complaint for plunder over the purchase of overpriced lampposts and streetlights during last January's Asean summit in Cebu to include Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. as a principal respondent.

DECORATIVE lampposts, the same as the ones used for the Asean summit, look good in the town of Naga, Cebu, but they cost only P20,000. TONEE DESPOJO/CDN

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said Ebdane approved the Asean contracts as public works secretary and should be included in the plunder case lodged with the Office of Ombudsman.

A report of the investigation on the government purchase of the lampposts showed that Ebdane, as public works secretary, also approved the installation of 30 lampposts in Portofino, a private beach resort in Lapu-Lapu City, Pamalakaya national chair Fernando Hicap said.

"As head of the DPWH at the time the purchase of overpriced lampposts was done, Ebdane should be charged along with local government and private officials," he said.

Pamalakaya's provincial affiliate, Pamana Cebu, was among the Cebu-based people's organizations that filed plunder complaint against Mandaue City Mayor Thadeo Ouano, regional officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways, and private individuals over the alleged scam.

Tough fight

"This is going to be a tough fight, but we will do what we can do to convince the Ombudsman in Cebu to include Ebdane in the plunder charge ...," said Hicap.

Two city mayors are now at loggerheads over the controversy as Mandaue City Mayor Thadeo Ouano accused Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña of being responsible for the plunder case filed against him.

Ouano said he welcomed the charges so he could clear his name on the allegation that he benefited from the multimillion-peso project.

Ouano said he did not believe that the lampposts were overpriced, saying the issue was just being politicized by personalities like Mayor Osmeña to mislead the public.

Overpriced

He reiterated his earlier claim that if proven that the lampposts were overpriced, then he would order them removed. But if the allegations turned out to be false, he said he would uproot only one lamppost and slam it on Osmeña's head.

Osmeña, in a separate interview, shrugged off Ouano's threat and denied he was politicizing the controversy. Osmeña said he did not know whistle blower Crisologo Saavedra personally and had only talked to him by phone once.

'Lousy mayors'

Osmeña also called Ouano and Lapulapu City Mayor Arturo Radaza as "lousy mayors" who destroyed the reputation of Cebu because of the allegedly anomalous transactions involving the lampposts installed in three Metro Cebu cities that hosted the 12th Association of Southeast Asian (Asean) summit in January.

Ouano admitted that he was the one who requested that streetlights be placed in Mandaue City so that they could benefit from the national budget for the summit activities.

He recalled that President Macapagal-Arroyo met with the people involved in the preparation for Asean summit at the Mactan Airbase last year where she announced that the national government had allocated P10 billion for the summit activities.

Since Mandaue City needed streetlights, Ouano said, they prepared the program of works and estimate to ensure the city gets a share in the budget.

DPWH's call

However, he reiterated that Mandaue City had no control over the fund, the bidding and the release of funds, which were done by the DPWH.

But the DPWH gave Mandaue City a chance to see the designs of the lampposts, Ouano said.

He said the city of Mandaue asked DPWH officials that efficient energy consumption should be considered in installing the lampposts as it would be the city government that would have to pay for the power consumption of the lampposts.

Ouano said Osmeña wrote Malacañang because he wanted the budget intended for the security and international media be given to the city of Cebu.

Ouano said he revealed this to drive home his point that the city of Mandaue just made a proposal to get share of the projects funded by the national government.

Leftists protest police intimidation in Ozamiz

OZAMIZ CITY—A militant party-list organization has complained of alleged intimidation by police authorities here.

Joseph Desusa, coordinator of Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) in Misamis Occidental, said police authorities have put them under constant surveillance since they set up a campaign office in the city.

He said that since last week, they noticed policemen posted in front of their office in Barangay Bañadero.

Desusa said at one time, policemen stalked him and another PM worker while they were on their way to the PM headquarters.

FREE KA BEL
KA SATUR
Idol ng BAYAN!
BAYAN-SOUTHERN TAGALOG

LEFTIST activists from Southern Tagalog provinces rally in Manila to protests alleged harassment of leftist party-list groups by the military. NINA CATHERINE CALLEJA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

The "intimidating acts escalated" last Sunday when a policeman removed a PM streamer hanged outside their office, according to Desusa.

No one was in the office when the incident took place around noon, he said.

Desusa said when their neighbors asked the police why the streamer was being removed, they were told "it is prohibited by law."

Desusa explained that the streamer's size did not violate the limit imposed the Commission on Elections.

He added that the streamer was in the group's campaign headquarters.

Ludie Gallardo, a provincial PM official, said no one in the local police office was on hand to given them an official explanation for Sunday's incident.

"This appears like harassment, plain and simple. Nevertheless, this will not cow us from pursuing our goal of electing a truly pro-people party in Congress," she said.

In Iloilo City, Bayan Muna leaders filed a complaint at the Comelec office for the attack on a house where campaign materials of the group were being prepared.

In a letter submitted to lawyer Elizabeth Doronilla, election officer of the province and city of Iloilo, Bayan Muna also said their posters have been removed from areas designated as common poster areas.

Bayan Muna-Iloilo spokesperson Winefredo Doblizo said their posters were destroyed or removed simultaneously between 1:30 a.m. to 6 a.m. on March 19 during a blackout in the city.

Aside from Bayan Muna, the posters of Anakpawis, Gabriela Women's Party and Kabataan Party were also removed or destroyed.

"This was obviously a coordinated and planned destruction of our posters," said Doblizo.

In the Jaro public plaza, only the bamboo poles used as frame for the poster of the four party-list groups were left. The frame was left lying at the sidewalk, the groups said in their complaint.

This also happened in the designated poster area at the Plaza Libertad in the City Proper District and in the public plaza of La Paz District. In Molo District, four posters of Bayan Muna at the lowest part of the frame were missing.

"We are reporting these incidents against our party-lists (groups) as we have adhered to Comelec rules and regulations," said Doblizo in their complaint. *Ryan Rosauro, Inquirer Mindanao and Nestor Burgos, Inquirer Visayas*

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Banahaw protection becoming popular issue among bets

LUCENA CITY—WITH THE APproaching Holy Week in the middle of an election season, the protection and rehabilitation of the mystical Mount Banahaw in Quezon and Laguna provinces have suddenly become the most heralded advocacy of every politician.

"For the past two years, we used to scour for funds just to feed the throngs of volunteers that will guard several entry points to the mountain against intruders. But for this year, it seems that we have found a number of new allies in the persons of politicians—all offering their help for the protection of Mount Banahaw," a member of the group that is organizing this year's volunteers told the INQUIRER.

The informant, who requested anonymity, said he just didn't want to antagonize the new allies.

"We welcome any help from any well-meaning Samaritan. It does not matter to us if they only want to earn some 'pogi points' for their candidacy," said the mountain protection advocate.

With the advent of the Holy Week, thousands of pilgrims will again trek to the mystical mountain of Banahaw, passing by the sleepy town of Dolores in the eastern part of the province.

To many believers, Mt. Banahaw is inhabited by spirits, elements and other worldly beings, particularly during the Lenten season.

Manny Calayag, Dolores environment and natural resource officer, said the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), a multisectoral group tasked by the government with safeguarding the area, has been conducting meetings with annul volunteer groups led by Banahaw de Dolores Outdoor Club in mapping out plans for the coming Holy Week.

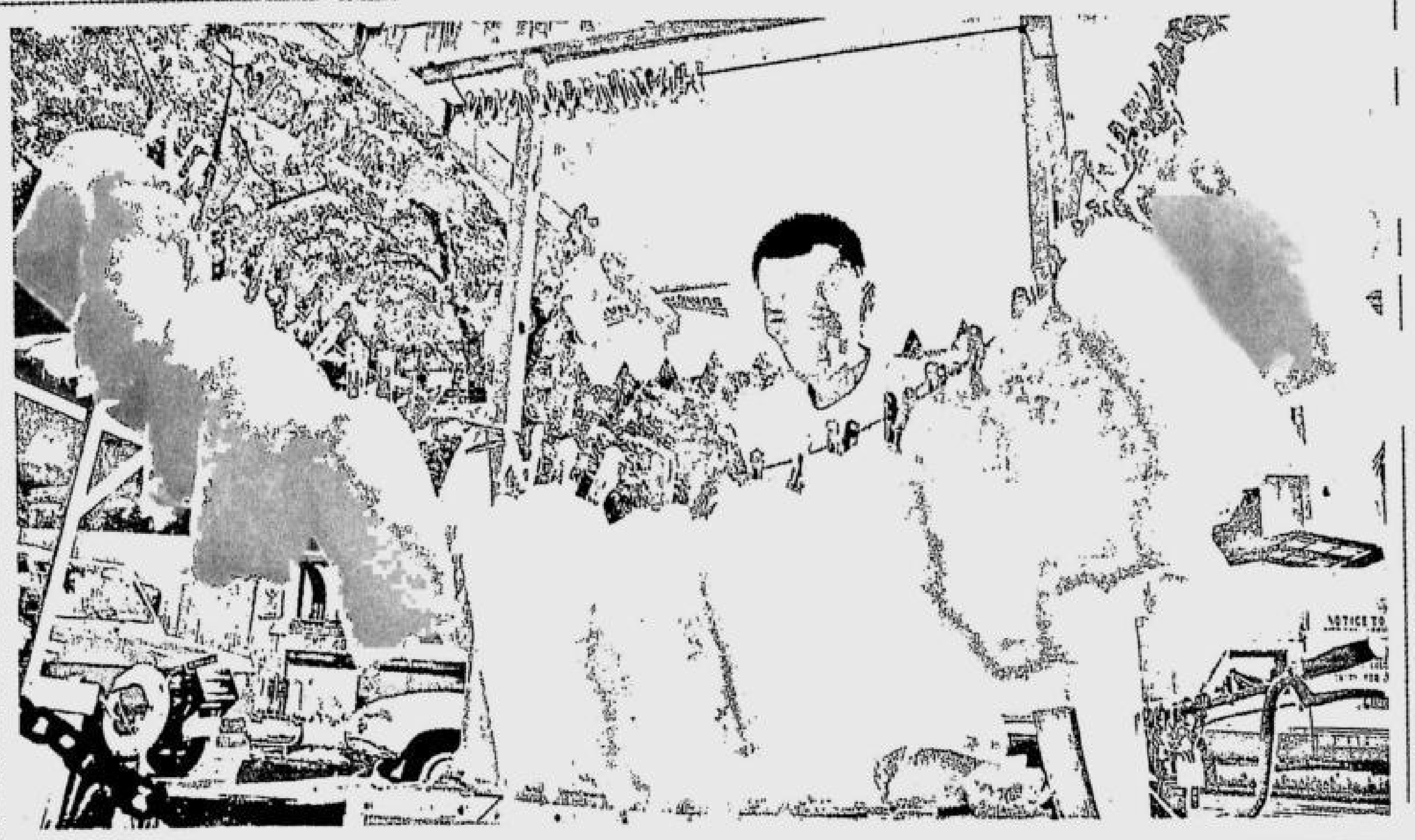
"Mountain pilgrims should just be contented in conducting their religious rituals outside the secured area. They should not attempt to wander inside the closed perimeter and reach the summit because it is not yet allowed," Calayag said.

In a recent inspection of Mt. Banahaw conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, local government officials and Tanggol Kalikasan (TK) staff workers, they found improvements in the closed areas.

Water has returned to the falls; the trails are no longer recognizable due to the regrowth of vegetation including "rafflesia," considered the world's biggest flower; wildlife has returned to the area and crystal clear water started to flow in several mountain rivers.

Jay Lim, TK staff, said a botanist from the Philippine National Herbarium-National Museum of the Philippines, Dr. Julie Barcelona, will conduct further study on the "rafflesia" species that reappeared in Mt. Banahaw.

"She (Dr. Barcelona) informed us that based on the photo of the flower that was published in the INQUIRER, the Mt. Banahaw 'rafflesia' seems different from the already identified species," Lim said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*



CANDY MAN
A vendor sells cotton candies already wrapped in plastic bags near the Magellan Shrine in Cebu City. ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Gloria allies in Bicol not backing relief of region's police chief

SORSOGON CITY—REP. JOSE SOLIS OF Sorsogon, a staunch ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said the relief of a police regional director is a prerogative of the Chief Executive but it should be done for a cause.

Solis was reacting to the reports that there was a move to have Chief Supt. Ricardo I. Padilla, Bicol police director, relieved from his office after he was allegedly caught amid the worsening feud between two members of a powerful political family in the region.

CAMARINES Sur Gov. Luis Raymond Villafuerte hosts members of the administration Senate ticket Team Unity in his province. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

The feud is between Rep. Luis R. Villafuerte of Camarines Sur and his son, Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Raymond Villafuerte.

"Those who are calling for the relief of Padilla must explain the reason for their move," Solis said.

He said many Bicol congressmen were against the relief of Padilla without a cause.

He said the congressmen were told by Malacañang that it would decide until March 25 whether to relieve Padilla or not.

Padilla had earlier said in an interview that he was trying to distance himself from the feud, saying he was concentrating on his job.

He said he had not yet received any order for his relief, but if told to vacate his post, "I will not stay any day longer."

A highly placed source in Camp Crame in Quezon City earlier told the INQUIRER that Padilla was on his way out as Bicol regional police chief.

Other sources said Padilla was being relieved due to the "jueteng" issue in the region.

Padilla was being considered by jueteng operators in the region as an obstacle to their continued operations.

While there have been no jueteng activities in Sorsogon and Albay, jueteng operations continue in Camarines Sur, reportedly under the control of a certain Bogart, while the illegal numbers game is also rampant in Camarines Norte under the operation of Jessie Lao.

Income from the illegal numbers game, according to PNP sources, is likely to finance the candidacies of several allies of the President.

The President's son, Dato, is running for a seat in the House of Representatives in Camarines Sur representing the first district. *Bobby Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

CANNES LIONS 2007
54th INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING FESTIVAL
17-23 JUNE
UPDATE

CANNES LIONS 2007 FILM AND PRESS JURIES ANNOUNCED

London, 20 March 2007 – The Organisers of the 54th Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival announced today the members of this year's Film and Press Juries.

Bob Scarpelli, Chairman & Chief Creative Officer, DDB Worldwide, will chair both juries in Cannes. Judging of the Press entries will take place over four days with the winners being revealed in Cannes on Wednesday evening, 20 June. The Film entries will be judged from the 17th of June. The winners will be honoured on Saturday evening, 23 June.

"These two juries of talented award winning creatives from around the world will unite together in Cannes to honour great and inspirational work," said Terry Savage, Executive Chairman of the Festival.

FILM JURY MEMBERS
USA, Bob Scarpelli, Chairman & CCO, DDB Worldwide (Jury President)
Argentina, Gastón Biglo, Executive Creative Director, Ogilvy & Mather
Australia, Emma Hill, Group Creative Director, Clemenger BBDO Melbourne
Belgium, Stef Selfslagh, Creative Partner/Co-Founder, Openhere
Brazil, Celso Loducca, President, Loducca Publicidade
Canada, Zak Mroueh, Vice President & Chief Creative Director, TAXI Canada
Denmark, Michael Robert, Creative Director, Robert/Boisen & Like-minded
France, Stéphane Xiberras, President & Creative Director, BETC Euro RSCG
Germany, Hartwig Keuntje, Chairman & Founder, Philipp und Keuntje
India, Ravi Deshpande, Chief Creative Officer, Contract
Italy, Paola Manfroni, Executive Creative Director, McCann Erickson
Japan, Masako Okamura, Creative Director, Dentsu
Mexico, Lourdes Lamasney, President & Chief Creative Officer, Young & Rubicam
New Zealand, Mike O'Sullivan, Executive Creative Director, Saatchi & Saatchi
Norway, Dagmar Kollstrom, Copywriter & Founding Partner, Ernö
South Africa, Philip Ireland, Founding Partner, Ireland-Davenport
Spain, Miguel Garcia Vizcaino, Founder & Executive Creative Director, Sra. Rushmore
Sweden, Jacob Nelson, Creative Director & Senior Partner, Forsman & Bodenfors
Thailand, Thor Santisiri, Chairman & Executive Creative Director, TBWA
The Netherlands, Ivar van der Zwan, Creative Director, Lowe Amsterdam
United Kingdom, Nik Studzinski, Executive Creative Director, Publicis
USA, Ty Montague, Co-President & Chief Creative Officer, JWT

PRESS JURY MEMBERS
USA, Bob Scarpelli, Chairman & CCO, DDB Worldwide (Jury President)
Argentina, Mariano Serkin, Executive Creative Director, Del Campo Nazca S&S
Australia, Adam Lance, Creative Director, Independent
Belgium, Philippe De Ceuster, Creative Director, Mortierbrigade
Brazil, Ricardo Chester, Chief Creative Officer, JWT
Canada, Chris Staples, Partner/Co-Creative Director, Rethink
Chile, Francisco Guarello, Partner & Chief Creative Director, El Cielo A&B
France, Anne de Maupeou, Chief Creative Officer & Co-President, Marcel Paris
Germany, Kerrin Nausch, Group Creative Director, Leo Burnett
Italy, Giovanni Porro, Executive Creative Director, Euro RSCG Milan
Portugal, Marco Dias, Creative Director, Brandiacentral
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South Africa, Julian Watt, Executive Creative Director, Net#work BBDO
Spain, Mónica Moro, Executive Creative Director, McCann Erickson
Thailand, Trong Tantivejakul, Executive Creative Director, Young & Rubicam
The Netherlands, Diederick Hillenius, Creative Partner, Selmore
Turkey, Kurtcebe Turgul, Creative Director, Medina Turgul DDB
United Kingdom, Danny Brook-Taylor, Creative Director, TBWA/London

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Benguet welcomes new customs, DA system to curb smuggling

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The province's vegetable industry stands to benefit most from the Bureau of Customs and Department of Agriculture's national single window (NSW) system, a new approach to curb the smuggling of agriculture and fishery products in all ports.

The customs bureau and the DA recently signed a memorandum of understanding to strictly require incoming foreign shipments to comply with pre-border and border DA quarantine safeguards and customs tax and inspection requirements.

Vegetable industry leaders here said the NSW aimed to synchronize the two agencies' efforts to come up with a unified system to eradicate smuggling.

The province's farmers have complained of vegetable smuggling which, they said, has often hurt the local markets.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo pastes an MMDA food lane pass that carries her face on the door of a vegetable delivery truck during her visit to the vegetable trading post of La Trinidad, Benguet. The pass is meant to prevent harassment by the trucks at checkpoints. LYN RILLON

The NSW provides a single and centralized database, processing system, customs inspection and cargo clearance on all shipments containing foreign agriculture and fishery products.

It also provides for the use of an electronic system of inspection and quarantine certification.

In a bid to strengthen antismuggling efforts, the customs bureau recently acquired four units of trucks with X-ray machines worth P50 million each.

Also pursuant to the NSW, Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales ordered ports nationwide to provide the DA with copies of all import cargo manifests to apprise the DA of the cargoes' contents.

To ensure that no foreign goods would be exempted from inspections, the order would cover all types of cargoes, whether they are classified as "general, mixed, or assorted or catch all."

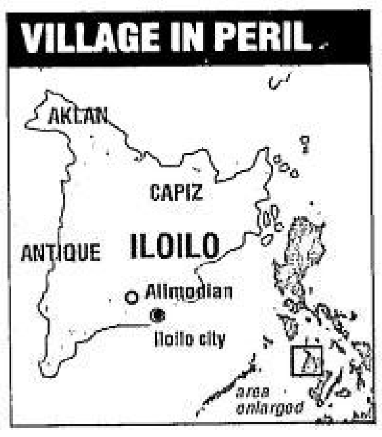
Morales signed an agreement with the Association of International Shipping Lines to provide the customs bureau and DA with the cargo manifests of its members' shipments at least 12 hours before the arrival of the vessels.

Alfredo Alangdeo, liaison officer of the Benguet Multi-Purpose Development Cooperative, a vegetable traders' group here, welcomed the NSW because, he said, it allowed private groups to join the inspection of shipments.

Efforts to curb smuggling of foreign agricultural products would also add more funds to the Agriculture Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF), which was created to pool money intended for programs designed to help local agriculture businesses compete with foreign products. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Geologists want entire Iloilo village transferred

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas



ILOILO CITY—GEOLOGISTS have recommended the relocation of an entire village in Alimodian town in Iloilo as it warned of possible landslides in 14 hinterland villages in two towns in Iloilo, especially with the coming of the rainy season.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Western Visayas, recommended the relocation of the entire barangay and the elementary school building of Barangay Umingan.

Rolando Calumarde, MGB chief geologist in Western Visayas, said the lives of residents could be endangered because soil and rocks loosened by rains are likely to move toward the village center.

The village is 32 km from the town proper and straddles the border of Iloilo and Antique provinces. It has 140 households, or around 800 residents.

The elementary school, which sits atop a hill in Barangay Umingan, has around 100 students.

The MGB made the recommendation to transfer the entire barangay since last year.

Sherwin Bering, Alimodian municipal deputized civil defense officer, said the local government is negotiating with the owner of a four-hectare relocation site costing around P600,000.

He said residents didn't want to move because their farms are there.

"We are not just transferring the school and the houses, we are transferring lives," said Bering.

129 landslide victims get new houses

By Ven Labro
Inquirer Visayas

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN LEYTE—IT WAS A happy day for couple Melencio and Norma Navos who were receiving visitors in their new house, some prominent people from Manila and abroad.

Like the Navoses, 129 other families, who were also victims of the landslide that obliterated their village last year, also formally received that Sunday their new houses at the Red Cross Village in Barangay New Guinsaugon, this town.

These 130 families now occupy the 65 duplex houses constructed using high-quality New Zealand steel frame technology and heat and termite-resistant cement board wall materials. Painted in white, each housing unit has a floor area of 30 sq. m. and an additional 5 sq. m. loft.

The construction of these houses, which was undertaken by Habitat for Humanity starting a few weeks after the landslide in February 2006, formed part of the P25-million rehabilitation project funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).

The blessing and formal turnover of the housing units was held March 18, 2007 at the Red Cross Village, with Australian Ambassador Tony Hely, Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) chair Richard Gordon, PNRC secretary general Alma de Leon and AusAID Counsellor Sam Zappia as guests.

"The Red Cross Village is a physical manifestation of your building up as a community and as a family, and the Australian government is glad to be part of this legacy through our relief and rehabilitation assistance," Hely said in his message during the program.

He said part of the assistance provided by the Australian government to the Red Cross is the organization and training of volunteers, as well as the provision of gears such as helmets, rain boots and first aid kits to all 30 barangays in St. Bernard.

"AusAID has also committed P32 million to the Red Cross for a community-based disaster preparedness project and also provided P36 million to UNDP for a disaster management project particularly for mapping areas vulnerable to hazards," the ambassador added.

Hely told the crowd that the occasion was a celebration not of the people's recovery from calamity but also of the prospects for a better future.

In his message, Gordon said the "primary purpose of the Red Cross is not only to alleviate human suffering but to restore human dignity right away."

Speaking on behalf of the beneficiaries, Lito Baylan, president of the homeowners association, expressed thanks to the donors particularly the Australians and the Red Cross, "for the gift of shelter and security."

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Bishop tells NPA, military: Respect Quezon peace zone

LUCENA CITY—CATHOLIC BISHOP Rolando Tria Tirona, head of the Prelature of Infanta, has called on government forces and communist New People's Army rebels operating in northern Quezon to respect the Zone of Peace declared by the local government units of Infanta, Real and General Nakar towns and different sectoral groups three years ago.

In a pastoral letter to be read in all Catholic churches in northern Quezon this Sunday, Tirona is appealing to armed protagonists to respect human lives.

"Don't kill. Life is sacred. It is God's gift to us," Tirona said in the letter written in Filipino, a copy of which was sent to the INQUIRER by Fr. Pete Montallana, coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples' Apostolate in the Prelature of Infanta and director of the Tribal Center for Development.

Tirona cited the killing of one Alex Ditchoso, a former NPA rebel-turned-government militiaman, by still unidentified suspects last month in the village of San Marcelino, General Nakar.

Reports said the victim was being used by the military in identifying allies of communist rebels in the area.

Tirona also recalled the unsolved slaying of siblings Marilou Sanchez and Virgilio Rubio in the same town last year.

The bishop said the two victims, both members of the militant Bayan Muna, had helped distribute relief goods to typhoon victims in northern Quezon before they were killed by still unidentified assailants.

"During this Lenten season, God is asking every one of us to remember Jesus Christ. He is in the image of our brothers, especially those deprived of justice and peace," the bishop said in a portion of his pastoral letter.

Respect for the zone of peace, according to Tirona, was also the appeal of local governments, Church, people and non-government organizations.

The bishop said respect for human rights has been embodied in the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law signed by government representatives and the communist-led National Democratic Front.

"Fear and tension are again beginning to envelop northern Quezon. The Church and all peace-loving people should embrace together and push for the armed groups to respect the zone of peace," Montallana said over the phone.

Several months ago, propaganda materials labeling Montallana a communist circulated in the towns of Infanta and General Nakar.

According to Montallana, the propaganda materials were signed by the National Alliance for Democracy, an ultra rightist group that allegedly serves as an anti-communist propagandist for the military.

But he just shrugged off the threat and vowed to continue his mission with the Agta tribe and his environmental advocacy.

Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

> 'Fear and tension are again beginning to envelop northern Quezon'

Catanduanes road plan to get ₱2B in funding

VIRAC, CATANDUANES—THE second phase of the multibillion-peso Catanduanes Circumferential Road Improvement Project (CCRIP) has been included in the 28th Yen Loan Package of the Japanese government.

This was disclosed Wednesday by Rep. Joseph Santiago, who said the project, which will run from Viga to Codon, San Andres via Pandan, will cost a total of P2 billion, including the counterpart of the Philippine government.

He said he expects the Japanese government, through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), to release the loan package before the year is over.

The Catanduanes congressman revealed that he and Rep. Jose Salceda of Albay defended the inclusion of the CCRIP second phase before the National Economic Development Authority after the Neda initially refused to approve the Catanduanes project for lack of documentary requirements.

Also last week, Gov. Leandro Verceles Jr. said President Macapagal-Arroyo had assured that the construction of the CCRIP second phase would be undertaken before her term of office ends in 2010.

The first phase of the road improvement, being undertaken by China Road & Bridge Corp. at a project cost of P957 million, is now nearing completion, with turnover rites expected this May.

The completion of the entire project, which could take place in the next three years, would bring benefits to the province through better transportation, faster pace of trade and commerce, and enhanced opportunities for ecotourism on the island.

Fernan Gianan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Congress pork doubles in '07 budget

From page A1

curry favor with their constituents. In the process, "commissions" end up in the pockets of certain parties.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. confirmed that the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), more commonly known as the graft-ridden pork barrel, was increased from P6.240 billion to P11.445 billion in the P2007 national budget of P1.126 trillion.

Increased in bicam

"We submitted P6.2 billion. It was increased in the bicam," Andaya said in a phone interview, referring to the bicameral conference committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives, which crafted the reconciled version of the General Appropriations Act.

The bicameral committee was chaired by Sen. Franklin Drilon, who had called for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation, and Albay Rep. Jose Ma. Salceda, now the President's chief of staff.

Both Drilon and Salceda could not be contacted for comment last night.

Andaya could not say whether the P11.445 billion in PDAF this year would be for all the 230 members of the House and the 23 senators, or how much each lawmaker would receive.

Andaya said the amount would be a "funding source for projects" specified by the Department of Budget and Management, such as school buildings, electrification, water and irrigation systems, and livelihood programs.

Two years ago, the pork barrel allocations for each congressman and senator were slashed to P40 million from P70 million, and to P120 million from P200 million, respectively.

The increase indicates that the individual allocations would be almost doubled.

Andaya said he was not part of the group that planned the increase.

Gov't workers retirement

Asked where the increase came from, Andaya said: "From an initial glance at the budget, the P3.6 billion came from the retirement pay of government workers."

Andaya acknowledged that if he could not find another source to fund the retirement pay, those who are retiring this year would not get the money due them.

"It will affect 7,000 to 8,000 this year, meaning they will not get their retirement pay assuming we cannot find some savings (to restore the allocation). But I have to look for items where I can get savings," the budget secretary said.

He said that the retirement pay was a "legal entitlement" of workers.

Pork used to buy overpriced fertilizer

From page A1

Umali (3rd dist., Nueva Ecija), went to two groups claiming to represent the interests of farmers in Nueva Ecija, according to copies of agreements and project proposals furnished the INQUIRER.

The pork barrel is an appropriation in the national budget that funds the pet projects of members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is a known source of kickbacks.

Projects funded by Umali's pork barrel were not among the pork expenditures attended with anomalies that were monitored by the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (Code-NGO) in its first installment of "PDAF Watch."

The Code-NGO report, which covered 68 road projects and seven information technology projects, was released to the media on Wednesday.

Name names

Reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson of the Genuine Opposition said Code-NGO should name the members of Congress whose pork barrel allocations were used to fund overpriced personal computers and poorly built or nonexistent roads.

Lacson said it was important to have the names of erring lawmakers revealed so the people could judge them through the ballot. "They should go to jail and not Congress for stealing the funds of the government," said Lacson, who has left his pork barrel allocation untouched.

For his part, Team Unity senatorial candidate Prospero Pichay called for the investigation of the implementing agencies involved in the misuse of the pork barrel.

The use of projects to improve farm productivity to justify the release of taxpayers' money through the lawmakers' pork barrel went on even after a Senate committee found irregularities in the use of more than P700 million for agriculture during the 2004 election campaign.

Copies of project proposals and fund releases furnished the INQUIRER showed that two groups closely associated with Umali benefited from the legislator's pork barrel in projects that involved overpriced fertilizer and irrigation pumps.

One of the groups, which calls itself the Masaganang Ani Para sa Magsasaka Foundation Inc. (Mamfi), received P12 million in funding from Umali's Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), another euphemism for the pork barrel.

The project was supposedly for selected municipalities of the third district of Nueva Ecija, which Umali represents.

Anti-impeachment lawmaker

"Most farmers in this area cannot afford to buy the needed inputs for their farms because of the financial crisis," said a copy of the Mamfi project proposal that was submitted to the office of Umali, a member of the administration Lakas party and one of the congressmen who voted to defeat the impeachment case against President Macapagal-Arroyo last year.

Farmers in Nueva Ecija, or elsewhere, are not likely to afford fertilizer that costs P1,500 per bottle.

"It is in this context that Congressman Umali . . . [came up with] the concept of providing farm input assistance to the poor farmers in the district," said the proposal, a copy of which was provided the INQUIRER by farmer leaders in the province.

Documents showed that the Department of Agriculture approved the release of funds for the group for the purchase of the fertilizer at P1,500 per bottle.

A check with agriculture suppliers, however, showed that liquid fertilizer could be bought anywhere from P40 to P100 per bottle of the most expensive brand.

The Mamfi proposal said the project's objectives were to "promote the proper use of farm inputs, especially the judicious use and organic liquid fertilizers."

Another objective, the proposal said, was "to enable farm families to earn more from their agricultural produce and liberate farm families from poverty."

But Mamfi, according to its articles of incorporation in the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), was not a group of farmers from Nueva Ecija.

Its articles of incorporation showed it established an office at Block 23, Lot 1, Road 18 at Phase 2 of Western Bicutan in Taguig, Metro Manila.

Its incorporators have addresses in Quezon City, Masbate province and Zamboanga City.

But in a delivery receipt it issued to the municipality of Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija, for 3,960 bottles of Nutro Ocean Fish Liquid Fertilizer, Mamfi listed its address as 16 Guevarra St., Paltok, Quezon City, the address of one of its incorporators, Marina C. Sula.

Sula, according to the Mamfi incorporation papers, contributed P16,000 to set up Mamfi in December 2003.

The delivery receipt was undated but was signed by Gabaldon Mayor Dominador Mandia.

While the project was intended to provide fertilizer to poor farmers through the pork barrel of Umali, copies of receipts issued by the municipality of Gabaldon, one of the project's supposed beneficiaries, showed that the municipality paid P100 per bottle of the fertilizer.

Several residents of Barangay Tagumpay in Gabaldon signed a certification that said the municipal government sold the fertilizer to them at P50 per bottle.

Side of congressman

Umali denied involvement in the overpricing.

"Not true," he said in a telephone interview. "I have nothing to do with those alleged anomalies committed by the two organizations."

Umali said all he knew was that the amounts mentioned were allotted by the Department of Agriculture for his district to help farmers in his area improve rice and corn production.

He had nothing to do with the disbursement of the funds, he said.

Umali also could not recall having dealings with the foundation, which was said to have been formed through his initiative or through the fruit vendors association and its officials.

Disbursements audited

"What I know is that the disbursement of the fund followed government procedures in bidding and other requirements," he said. "If there is such allegation of anomalies, all that has to be done is to look into the records and papers of the purchases which are in the DA."

Umali also said that he was sure that the fund disbursement had been audited and an audit report would reveal if the use of the funds had been irregular.

He said some politicians in the province, whom he did not identify, could be behind the reports.

He said his political enemies were prepared to destroy his reputation because he was reported to be planning to run for governor.

"I am just minding my work. I busy myself trying whatever assistance I can bring home to my district," Umali said.

Fruit vendors in Tondo

Another group that received funds for its project from the pork barrel of Umali was the Samahan ng mga Manininda ng Prutas sa Gabi Inc. (SMPG) whose office is in Balut, Tondo in Manila.

A copy of an agreement between the Department of Agriculture and the SMPG said it had "requested the honorable Aurelio Umali ... for the allocation/transfer amounting to three million pesos in support to (sic) various agricultural development programs in the fourth district of Nueva Ecija."

"The office of the congressman, through the office of the secretary of agriculture, has agreed to provide funds of three million pesos released through its (DA) regional field unit III for the provision of farm inputs/implements," said the agreement.

While the agreement did not mention what type of inputs or implements were to be purchased with the money, a project proposal of the SMPG said it would be used for the purchase of 15 diesel engines and water pumps for irrigation at a price of P120,000 per unit.

Overpriced pumps

A check with local suppliers of diesel engines and irrigation pumps showed that these cost an average of from P40,000 to P50,000 per unit.

The proposal also said 15 sets of screws, foot valves, and suction and discharge hoses were also to be purchased at P35,000 per set.

The proposal, signed by Umali and Anita U. Tansipek, who is the head of SMPG, said some P600,000 was to be spent for "deliveries, installation, training and monitoring." *With reports from Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon Desk; Cynthia D. Balana and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Bishop Tutu condemns RP rights violations

From page A1

Macapagal-Arroyo to stop the murders.

"This session of the tribunal is important, to alert the world to what is really happening in the Philippines," sociologist Francois Houtart, who heads the seven-man jury of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, told delegates and plaintiffs.

"Stop using the so-called war against terrorism to oppress and kill your own people," Tutu said.

The tribunal, an independent body founded in 1979 in Italy by lawyers, writers and intellectuals, examines and judges complaints regarding violations of human rights submitted by the victims themselves or groups representing them.

The five-day hearing is being held in a church in The Hague.

Groups representing political prisoners in the Philippines and activist-victims of unsolved killings and disappearances will testify before the tribunal.

The Filipino human rights group Karapatan has documented more than 800 cases of extrajudicial killings, including that of political activists, journalists, farmers and students since Ms Arroyo came to power in 2001. (The INQUIRER count is 296.)

Symbolic ruling

The Philippine government and the military have blamed the communist New People's Army rebel group for most of the murders, saying the organization had purged its own ranks. Leftist groups have denounced these assertions.

The tribunal is expected to issue a symbolic ruling on Sunday.

"The efforts of the tribunal will provide evidence of accountability and responsibility for a more propitious time when justice will be served," Marie Enriquez, secretary general of Karapatan, told reporters.

Palparan not off the hook

Also yesterday, acting Commission on Human Rights Chair Dominador Calamba II and CHR Commissioner Quintin Quito III said retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan was not yet off the hook despite of findings by CHR Commissioner Eligio Mallari that there was no solid evidence to link the former Army commander in Central Luzon to the extrajudicial executions in the region.

Calamba said a wider investigation could be conducted into the Palparan case.

Mallari had conducted hearings on Aug. 24-25 on accusations that Palparan and senior officers under his command were involved in political killings in the area.

No final finding

He said he had recommended that the charges against Palparan and his officers be dropped and that he hoped the entire commission would approve his recommendation.

"As far as the commission is concerned, there is no final finding yet" on the Palparan case, according to Calamba. He said the commission was to review Mallari's resolution en banc.

After a review of Mallari's report, Calamba and Quito said the commission might decide to deploy field investigators to gather more evidence and interview witnesses.

Also yesterday, Palparan announced he would run for Congress with a yet to be named party-list group that he said would represent "all people who are engaged in security who are marginalized."

This includes barangay tanods, members of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu), and even security guards, Palparan told reporters at the Philippine Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, where he attended its 110th anniversary yesterday.

"My advocacy would be on national security," said Palparan, who had been dubbed by militant groups as "the butcher" for allegedly being behind the killings of members of militant groups in provinces under his command.

Palparan expressed confidence the CHR would eventually clear him. "That is expected," he said of the clearance he got from the CHR investigator. "I am happy because, finally, the CHR has come out with findings that are based on a factual and truthful investigation." *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Jocelyn R. Uy, Christian V. Esguerra, Kit Bagaipo, Inquirer Visayas, AP*

Sons of their fathers in new party-list groups

From page A1

Señeres (Buhay)—son of Roy Señeres, former ambassador and chair of the National Labor Relations Commission, and Emmanuel Joel Villanueva (Cibac)—son of Bro. Eddie Villanueva, leader of the Jesus Is Lord Movement.

"We have long thought about this because there is no representation of OFWs in Congress where they should have a voice considering their contributions to our country," Ang told reporters in an interview.

Gov't's front organizations?

Aside from Ahon Pinoy!, Rosales said the party-list organizations that were administration fronts were Babae Ka!, Ang Kasangga, Akbay Pinoy, Aksyon Sambayanan (Aksa), Agbiag!, Biyaheng Pinoy, Aangat Tayo, Aangat ang Kabuhayan (Anak), Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy (Anad) and Kakusa.

Ang, 38, took exception to the allegation of Akbayan party-list Rep. Loretta Ann "Etta" Rosales, that Ahon Pinoy! was one of 11 party-list organizations being used as fronts by the Arroyo administration.

Rosales has asked the Comelec to review the party-lists' accreditation.

"Dante 'Klink' Ang and Dante Ang are two different people. It is sad that maybe in the home of Representative Rosales she dictates on her children," Ang said.

While he agreed that party-lists that were alleged fronts of the administration should be investigated by the Comelec, Ang said Rosales should be more "responsible" with her statements and not single him out.

Debate on issues

"We also have other nominees like Ka Bernie Ople and Ernesto Herrera III. We are our own people with respective careers, and we have supported advocacies for OFWs," he said.

Ang pointed out that Ahon Pinoy! could not possibly be an administration front because while his father is part of the government, Herrera's father is an "opposition stalwart."

Ang, the party-list's No. 1 nominee, challenged Rosales to "elevate the debates to issues."

He said that if elected to the House of Representatives, Ahon Pinoy! would file bills that would seek to provide collateral-free loans for returning OFWs' reintegration, education for the children of OFWs, and housing for the OFWs, among other benefits.

"What the government is giving to OFWs is not enough," Ang said.

Underrepresented

Ahon Pinoy! will promote the overseas employment program that has set up small businesses and provided homes and education to the children of OFWs, Ople said.

"These are the legacies of my brother," Ople, 74, said.

For his part, the 28-year-old Herrera said that Ahon Pinoy! "feels that OFWs are underrepresented."

"We have the moral obligation to provide better service for the OFWs," Herrera said.

On Wednesday, Rosales told reporters at the Comelec that the personalities and the offices behind these party-list groups had made them dubious.

"We identified them as having come from three (sources)—the Office of External Affairs in Malacañang, the National Alliance of Democracy where vigilantes come from, and the personalities in Sigaw ng Bayan (the administration-backed pro-Charter change group)," Rosales said.

Impeachment

Asked how having these party-list groups in Congress would benefit the administration, Rosales said: "A lot, a whole lot."

"The House of Representatives in the 13th Congress has been lock, stock and barrel under the palm of the administration. So if they get a nice majority here, which means to say a combination of district representatives and party-lists, they will be able to thwart any effort by any opposition to find a resolution to unresolved issues of the 13th Congress that include the Garcillano scandal and the impeachment," Rosales said.

The lawmaker said that aside from investigating the background of these party-list organizations, the Comelec could disqualify them the way the Mamamayan Laban sa Droga (MAD) was disqualified by the Supreme Court in 2001.

Supreme Court guidelines

Rosales said the Supreme Court's eight-point guideline for the organizations participating in the party-list system of representation had been the "yardstick" for determining which should be accredited by the Comelec.

The Supreme Court said the party or organization "must not be an adjunct of, or a project organized, or an entity funded or assisted by the government."

If the Comelec fails to disqualify the 11 party-lists, Rosales said, she would bring the matter to the Supreme Court.

"The (party-list) is an instrument of the marginalized and underrepresented. Let us not sabotage this or undermine it contrary to the interests of these people. *Ang liit na ng bintana, nanakawin pa* (The window is already small and it still might be stolen)," Rosales said.

Rosales met with Comelec Commissioner Ressurreccion Borra who agreed with her that there should be a Comelec commissioner in charge of the accreditation of party-list groups.

In a written note to Rosales, Borra recommended Commissioner Rene Sarmiento for the job.

Iggy's wife fears for life

From page A1

In her 17-page answer to her husband's petition, Alicia said Congressman Arroyo left the family home in June 2006. He has since abandoned her and their child and taken up with a mistress, she said.

In September 2003, Iggy Arroyo, then a businessman, announced that he was the Jose Pidal who owned the bank accounts supposedly containing laundered campaign money that Sen. Panfilo Lacson said belonged to the President's husband.

But in the Senate inquiry into Lacson's claim that Mike Arroyo owned 12 bank accounts that held at least P260 million, Iggy Arroyo invoked his right to privacy and refused to answer questions.

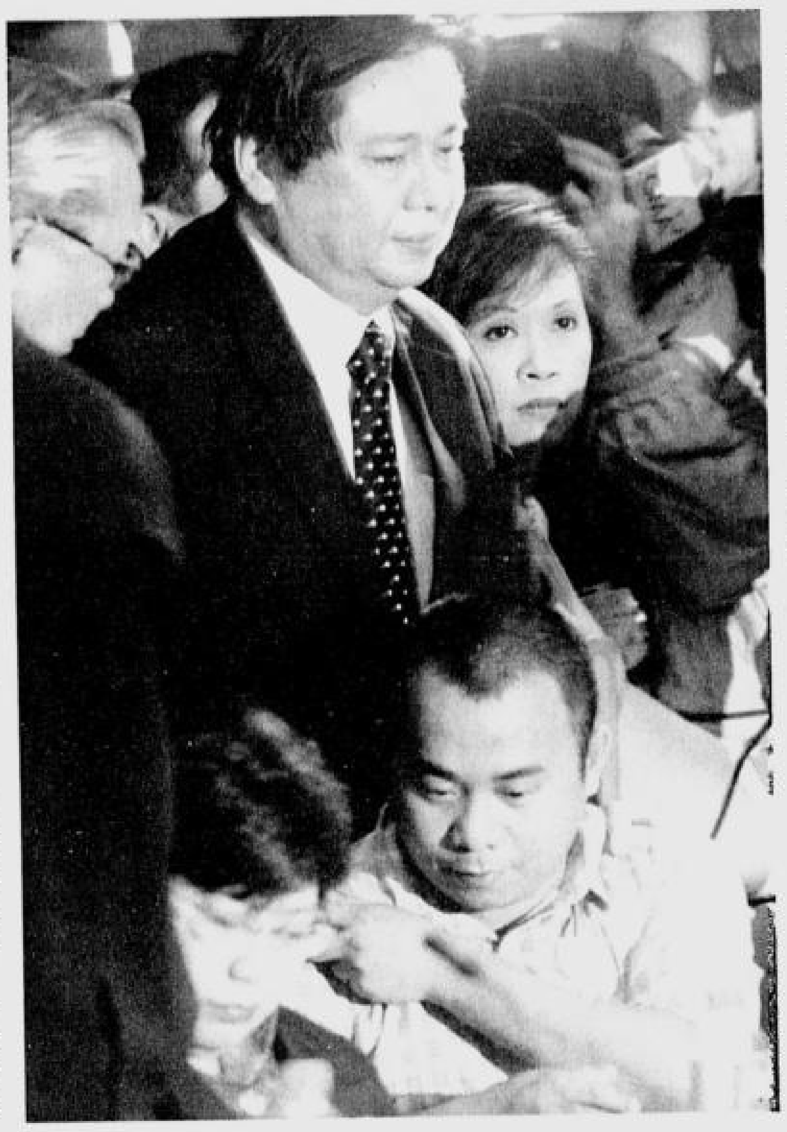
The issue has yet to be resolved.

Prohibitions

Lorna Kapunan, legal counsel for Alicia Arroyo, said the court issued the order without a hearing in view of the gravity of the purported threat against the lives of mother and daughter.

Per Judge Pison's order, Congressman Arroyo and "his agents," including members of the Presidential Security Group, are:

- Prohibited from "threatening to commit or committing personally or through another, any of the acts ... or any act of violence against [Alicia], her minor child and household members."
- Barred from "harassing, annoying, telephoning, contacting or communicating in any form" with Alicia and the child at their residence at La Vista subdivision, Quezon City, the child's school or Alicia's place of employment.



FIRST GENTLEMAN Mike Arroyo taps the shoulder of witness Eugenio "Udong" Mahusay as they meet on Sept. 2, 2003, during the Senate blue ribbon hearing on Sen. Ping Lacson's privilege speech accusing Arroyo of using an alias—Jose Pidal—to deposit millions of pesos in campaign funds. INQUIRER FILE

- Ordered to "absolutely desist and refrain from imposing any restraint on the personal liberty of [Alicia] and from taking from [her the] custody and care of the ... child."

Pison also ordered the Bureau of Immigration "to hold the departure from the country" of the child.

She warned Congressman Arroyo that violation of the protection order was "punishable by law," and that the barangay captain of La Vista and the commander of the nearest police station had been directed to assist in its implementation.

The judge set the pre-trial conference and preliminary conference on March 29, "to enable this court to determine the advisability of making this temporary protection order permanent."

Blissful start

In fighting for sole custody of their child, Alicia Arroyo said her marriage started out "very blissful" in 1994 but soon degenerated into a life of lies, treachery and debauchery with a heavy smoker and drinker.

Her husband "incessantly gambles," "lies about his whereabouts" and "lives an unhealthy lifestyle," she said.

He "lavishly spends for his mistress" on their trips to such places as Rome, Spain, the United States, Korea and Australia, "but refuses to give his family their legal share in the conjugal funds."

Alicia also said that if the man who claimed to own the Jose Pidal accounts had snubbed his child's birthday celebrations and first communion but had "time to take his mistress to vacations abroad, then the heartaches, dangers and ill-effects of having the father around the child far outweigh the benefits of the father's presence."

Case study

Aside from the temporary protection order, Pison issued two other orders both dated March 21.

The first order directed the court social worker, Arsenia Dalisay, to conduct and submit a case study report on the child; the second ordered Alicia Arroyo to present the child to the court during the pre-trial conference, with an explicit order that the child "shall not be brought out of the country without prior order from this court while the petition is pending."

The judge found merit in Alicia's petition, saying there was "reasonable ground to believe that an imminent danger of violence against [mother and child] might occur."

Pison also considered the "bare allegations of the verified answer of [Alicia] that the safety of her life as well as her minor child ... and family members are at stake."

In pleading for the protection order, Alicia Arroyo pointed out that her husband was "in government office" and had "at his disposal elements of the Philippine National Police and the Philippine military."

"He has numerous armed bodyguards and back-up vehicles. He certainly has connections in high places and has almost unlimited resources," she said, adding:

"He is close to the First Family [and] is almost always with them. He even shares PSG and PNP security personnel with his nephew, [Pampanga Rep.] Mikey Arroyo."

Iggy: All lies

By Michael Lim Ubac

ON THE PHONE, NEGROS OCcidental Rep. Ignacio Arroyo declined to answer "all the lies" narrated by his estranged wife.

"There is a gag order," he said. "I don't know if I'm [required to] refrain from speaking of or giving any comment on this case. What I can tell you is that there is an order that the child cannot be brought out of the country, a hold-departure order. In that same order, my child has to be presented on the 29th of March for a preliminary hearing."

Arroyo has two other daughters from a previous marriage that had been annulled.

A source told the INQUIRER that the lawmaker filed the custody case last month, after Alicia Arroyo refused to allow him to visit the child.

Joint custody

"Although the marriage is not yet annulled, they have been estranged for over a year now," said the source, who asked not to be named for fear of being cited in contempt by the court.

"He has not seen his daughter since December [2006]. That's why he asked for joint custody. All he wants is to see his daughter every two weeks, or, if allowed by the court, once every week," the source said, adding that the father wanted to have "quality time" with the child.

As for the charge that Arroyo was a heavy smoker and drinker, the source said: "He stopped smoking at one point. But half of the world smokes."

'One woman'

The source also denied that the lawmaker was a "womanizer," saying that he only had "one woman."

"Right now, he's a bachelor and devotes his time to his constituents" in the fifth district of Negros Occidental," the source said.

Neither was the lawmaker a gambler, according to the source: "Gambler? Half of the governors, mayors and congressmen are cockfighting aficionados. But he doesn't go to many cockfights. How can she make that allegation?

"All of that is not true. She's just looking for a reason [to win the custody battle]. The bottom line is money."

GMA orders 10 percent hike for all government workers

From page A1

GOCCs and GFIs will come from their respective corporate funds.

The executive order directs LGUs to pay for the increase of their officials and employees.

P8.2B set aside

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, said P8.2 billion had been set aside in the 2007 national budget to cover the pay increase of about 840,000 officials and employees of national government agencies for the second half of the year.

Recto said about 440,000 public school teachers would get a pay increase of about P1,000 a month.

A total of P2.1 billion in the current national budget has also been allotted for an increase in the allowance and hazard pay of 282,349 police and military personnel.

Ms Arroyo ordered a P30 increase in the daily subsistence allowance and a P120 increase in the monthly hazard pay of personnel in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Philippine Coast Guard and National Mapping and Resource Information Authority.

She said the subsistence allowance was last adjusted in 1998, while the hazard pay has remained at P120 a month since it was first given in 1987.

Justification

Justifying the salary increase, the executive order said "an efficient and effective civil service is crucial to the continuous development of our country."

Ms Arroyo said the pay increase was part of the "social payback" that was made possible due to her administration's "sturdy fiscal house, solid program of good governance and political stability under the rule of law and criminal justice."

In her speech, the President also announced a 50-hectare housing project in Silang, Cavite, for the PNP as she exhorted the PNPA graduates and all police personnel to protect the integrity of the May 14 congressional and local elections. *Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Assumption grads urged to return to values of saintly founder Eugenie

From page A1

a "challenge" to the spirit of the order's founder, Blessed Marie-Eugenie Milleret, who preached passion for truth, social justice and peace.

Marie-Eugenie of Jesus, who was beatified by Pope Paul VI on Feb. 9, 1975, will be canonized on June 3 at St. Peter's Square in Rome. In 2006, the Vatican recognized that the healing of a Filipino girl, Maria Carmela Therese Eugenie "Risa" Bondoc, was a miracle that occurred through her intercession.

Ma. Lourdes Herrera, president of the Assumption Alumnae Association (AAA), said the organization had invited Ms Arroyo to join the celebration in Rome of Marie-Eugenie's sainthood, especially because the miracle that paved the way for her canonization occurred in a Filipino family.

Ms Arroyo is an "Assumption daughter all the way."

She studied at the Assumption in San Lorenzo Village, Makati City, from kindergarten to college, graduating with honors and a degree in economics in 1968. She also taught at the college's economics department from 1984 to 1987.

"As an alumna, she is recognized and has imbibed some of the values. She is not perfect. But I'd like to think that she embodies the struggles faced by the Assumption girl or daughter of Marie-Eugenie," Matias said.

Doing her best

Ms Arroyo has survived two attempts in the House of Representatives to impeach her for corruption and collusion with an election official to rig the results of the 2004 presidential election, among other charges.

Nevertheless, Matias expressed the belief that Ms Arroyo was doing her best to make a difference for the good of the country—a trademark, she said, of an Assumption daughter.

Because of her position and the political sphere she is in, the President is facing a greater challenge to live up to the values of Marie-Eugenie, Matias observed.

"The more responsibilities we have, the more challenges," she added.

Asked to assess the college's most recognized graduate, Matias declined to "single her out," pointing out that all Assumption students had their own difficulties to face.

RISA BONDOC was placed on top of the tomb of Sister Eugenie, and the miracle happened. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DEVOTEES of the new saint hold a press conference on Wednesday at Assumption College in Makati. From left, Chinit Rufino, executive director of the Marie-Eugenie Institute; Sister Maria Josefina Matias, R.A., provincial superior of the Philippines-Thailand Province Religious of the Assumption, and Ma. Lourdes Herrera, president of Assumption Alumnae Association. ERIK ARAZAS

Clarion call

Matias said the canonization of Marie-Eugenie should be a "clarion call" to Assumption graduates to return to the teachings of their founder, which are anchored on justice, respect for creation, peace and solidarity.

"It's not about earthly success; it's about truth and upholding the Kingdom," she said.

According to Herrera, Ms Arroyo is very focused and determined—qualities that may be traced to her Assumption upbringing.

"She is competent as an economic leader. She knows what she wants," Herrera said.

Asked if the Assumption community was proud of its graduates, including Ms Arroyo, Matias said: "Yes, of course, the Assumption is happy that the alumnae touched by Marie-Eugenie's teachings are doing their part in society."

She said there were many Assumption graduates who were not as well known as the President but were making a difference in their respective spheres.

"Women have a big influence in society and they certainly should not be afraid of shying away from that responsibility," Matias said.

Other Assumption graduates include former President Corazon Aquino; Loren Legarda and Tessie Aquino Oreta, senatorial candidates of opposing camps; and Marixi Rufino Prieto and Alexandra Prieto Romualdez, INQUIRER chair and president, respectively.

Landed family

Anne Eugenie Milleret was born in Metz, France, on Aug. 25, 1817, to a landed and educated, albeit non-believing, family.

She was 19 when she decided to devote her life to the Church.

At 22, she founded the Congregation of the Religious of the Assumption to educate and encourage women to live an authentic Christian life and transform society.

In 1892, with the support of Spain's Queen Regent Maria Cristina, Marie-Eugenie's close friend Sister Celestine brought the order to the Philippines.

Celestine built a school for female teachers, the Escuela Normal para Las Mujeres—the first Assumption school in Asia.

The school was closed when the Philippine revolution broke out in 1898, which was also the year Marie-Eugenie died.

The Assumption sisters returned to Manila in 1904 on the request of Pope Pius X. They opened a school for elementary and secondary levels in Herran, Manila, and later established more schools in other parts of the country.

The Assumption order currently owns and manages 15 schools nationwide. The AAA estimates that the order has produced about 36,000 graduates.

Risa's story

Per the account of Assumption officials, Rosendo and Carmen Bondoc sought the intercession of Blessed Marie-Eugenie after Risa, their adopted daughter, was found to have a malformation in the brain in 1995.

Doctors in the Philippines and the United States had said that Risa would never walk, talk or see because of this medical problem, and that she would need constant care.

Carmen, an Assumption graduate, brought the then 3-year-old Risa to the Convent of the Religious of the Assumption in Paris.

Superior General Sister Cristina Maria laid Risa on top of Marie-Eugenie's tomb and prayed that the child would be healed.

Risa is now 12 and a "bubbly and normal" grade school student at Assumption San Lorenzo, defying her doctors' previous diagnoses and despite the absence of development in her left brain.

Her health and her medical condition have been thoroughly studied by the Extraordinary Theological Commission in Rome, which recognized it in 2006 as a true miracle. *With a report from Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

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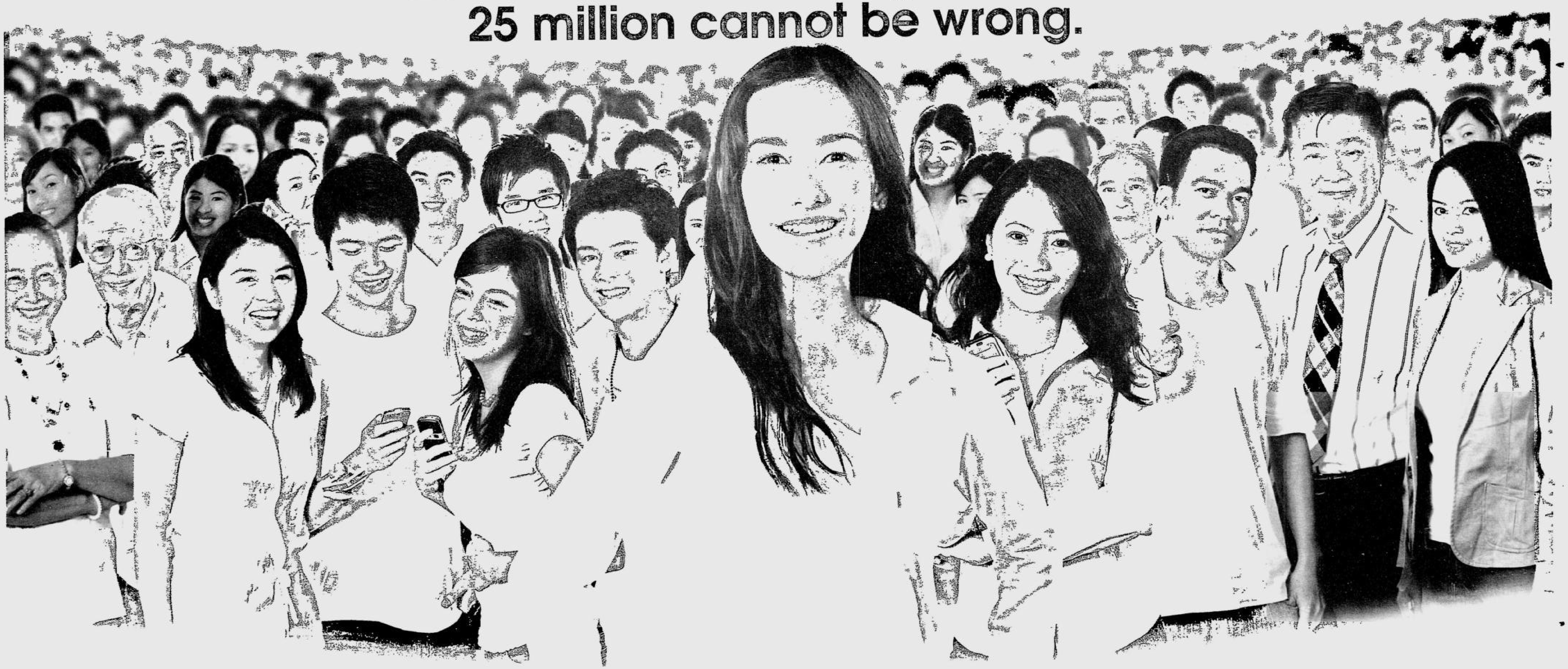

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'Alleged drug lord's trade not only in Pasig'

Witness claims operations extended to 8 other cities in country

By Kristine L. Alave

ALLEGED PASIG CITY DRUG LORD AMIN Imam Boratong reportedly also supplied illegal drugs to eight other cities.

This claim was made yesterday by the government's key witness in a landmark drug case.

Samer Palao, Boratong's former right hand, told the court that Boratong supplied shabu to the Mindanao cities of Digos and Marawi.

Palao also claimed Boratong sent drugs to Cebu, Bulacan, Cavite, Tandang Sora in Quezon City, Quiapo in Manila, and Taguig City.

Boratong allegedly owns the 2,000-square meter compound with shabu stalls and located a few meters away from the Pasig City Hall. It was demolished in February 2006 during a raid where about 300 persons were arrested.

Boratong, in turn, alleged that Palao was the operator of the shabu dens at 41 F. Soriano St., Brgy. Sto. Tomas, Pasig.

Base

The site, which opened in 1997, reportedly become the manufacturing and marketing base of a flourishing P900-million shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) business.

Officials said there were about 6.7 million regular shabu users in the country as of 2005.

In Pasig, Boratong allegedly supplied drugs to various villages including Barangays Pineda, Rosario, and San Joaquin. Palao said Boratong employed about 50 drug pushers in the city.

Palao also told the court that Boratong had four assassins in his employ to eliminate competitors and clients who incurred huge debts.

The witness identified the alleged hitmen as Ramil Along, Nasser Laber, Manguntawa Sultan, and Pangkatan Sultan.

"They supply the entire Philippines with shabu," Palao claimed. "Although he controlled Pasig City only, he was also able to supply illegal drugs to other areas."

As Boratong's assistant, Palao said he witnessed the preparation and packing of shabu in Boratong's Pasig house for shipment to other parts of the country. Boratong usually contacted his employees through their cellular phones, Palao said.

The witness added that Boratong earned not less than P3 million some days.

According to Palao, there was so much money coming in that Boratong used a money counting machine lent to him by a manager of an Equitable Bank of the Philippines branch.

While Palao was testifying, Boratong made faces and commented on what he heard. The witness later complained to the court and to his lawyers about Boratong's behavior. Raymond Fortun, Boratong's lawyer then apologized to the court on behalf of his client.

In a related development, Fortun requested the court yesterday to allow his client undergo a general checkup in a hospital nearest to the National Bureau of Investigation headquarters, where Boratong is detained. Boratong had complained of chest and stomach pains, and added he had a heart problem.

Fortun also filed a waiver of appearance for his client, after Boratong failed to appear in court last week, citing health reasons.

Erap asks Sandigan OK for award night

By Jocelyn R. Uy

LOOKS LIKE FORMER PRESIDENT ESTRADA has a few things lined up in his to-do list.

An award as the "Outstanding Citizen of San Juan" awaits him on March 27, the highlight of the monthlong celebration of the town's centennial foundation.

After gracing a grand ball, he intends to stay overnight with his 102-year-old mother, Dona Mary Ejercito in her Greenhills home. And on June 9, he is set to accommodate his son, San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito's wedding in his Tanay rest house.

Estrada is asking the Sandiganbayan Special Division to allow him to fulfill these commitments.

"San Juan may be but a small town but there are those, including Estrada, who love it and are there loved in turn, beyond measure. We most respectfully beg that permission be given to Estrada, an accomplished son of the town, to attend the said event," said Estrada's lead counsel Rene Saguisag in a four-page motion submitted to the court on Wednesday.

Contributions

Despite being a nonresident of San Juan for several years now as he is under house arrest in Tanay in Rizal province, Estrada, who is facing plunder charges at the Sandiganbayan on trial for plunder, was chosen as the recipient of the "most significant" award for his "notable" feats and contributions to the town. Estrada was San Juan mayor for 18 years from 1968 to 1986.

In a rather formal son-to-father letter, Ejercito said: "This Municipality recognizes, appreciates and honors your most imperative role in what San Juan has become today through your outstanding leadership and selfless love for the people."

The awarding ceremonies has been scheduled at The Arena next Tuesday, the culmination of San Juan's celebration of its 100th anniversary. Estrada also requested that he be allowed to sleep over in his mother's house after the event.

Comparing the town's centenary to a wedding as a once-in-a-lifetime occasion, Saguisag also asked the court to reconsider its initial decision turning down Estrada's request to allow Ejercito to hold his wedding inside his private estate. Saguisag said holding the wedding in the rest house would mean less problems on control and expenses.

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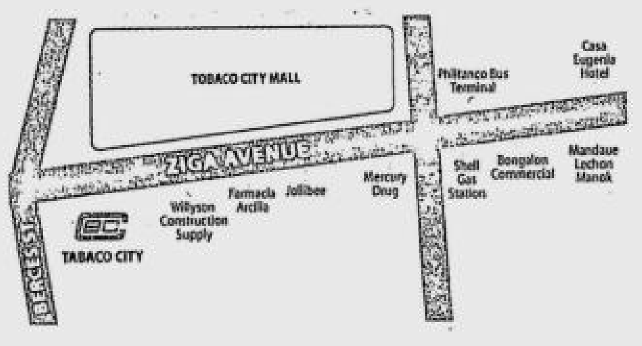
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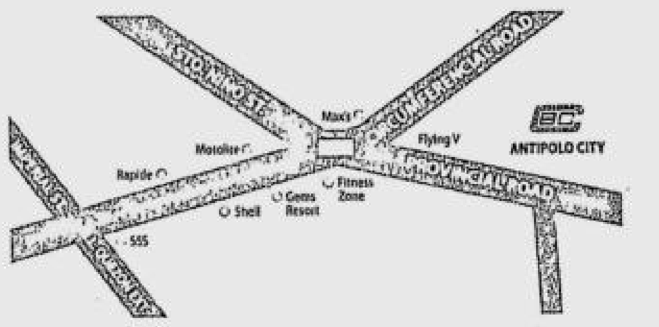
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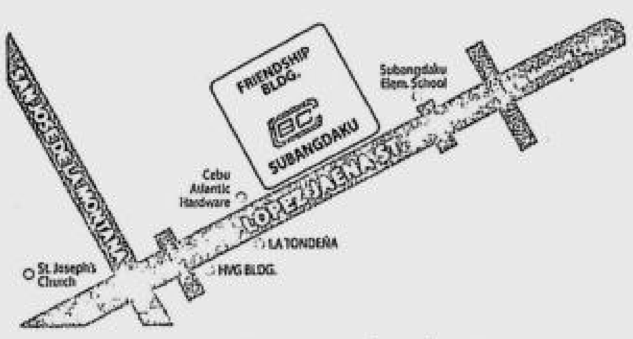
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Safety steps underway vs water contamination spread

By Julie M. Aurelio

A DAY AFTER THE GROUNDWATER IN LAS Piñas was reported to be contaminated with Trichloroethylene (TCE), the city's mayor assured residents that the incident occurred only in isolated areas where the Philips Electronics and Lighting plant used to operate.

Mayor Imelda Aguilar also demanded full disclosure from the electronic company on the findings of its preliminary tests of the groundwater. "We take responsibility over this unfortunate incident without necessarily taking the blame, and let the axe fall where it may," she said in a statement yesterday.

Aguilar also ordered the City Legal Office to look into the possible culpability of the plant. The mayor has created a task force to determine the extent of the reported contamination.

Immediate remedial measures to spare residents from the adverse effects of the poisoned water are also underway.

"The contamination was only reported in portions of Monarch Subvision and Cristeta Subdivision in Brgy Pamplona I, and Greenview Subdivision in Pamplona III. The origin of the reported chemical is yet to be ascertained," the mayor pointed out.

Philips Corp. conducted a clear-up of the site and told city officials in last December that they were testing their waste water facility for possible chemical contamination.

TCE, a chemical used in the production of polyvinyl chloride, flame retardants and insectides and used as an industrial solvent, is a volatile compound that can cause cancer.

Aguilar also clarified that except for six families, city residents were not affected by the possible chemical contamination.

On Wednesday, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources advised residents against drinking from groundwater sources after reports surfaced that its groundwater was contaminated with TCE.

Residents were immediately advised to stop using deep well water for bathing, washing, or cleaning chores, or even for watering plants.

Aguilar, however, assured her constituents that the city government was closely coordinating with water concessionaire Maynilad, which supplies water to the affected areas, to ensure a regular supply of the commodity for free and to avoid shortages especially with the approach of summer.

NEW PARAÑAQUE HOSPITAL

Parañaque City Mayor Florencio Bernabe Jr. (left) inaugurated the new Parañaque City Hospital along Quirino Avenue, Barangay La Huerta recently. Also in photo are (from left) Councilor Edward Co, hospital director Dr. Loreleigh Obed, Rep. Ed Zialcita and barangay Chair Ernesto Jose. Behind are Councilors Lorna Camapano and Heidi Baes.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SPECIAL NURSING REVIEW ADVISORY

- Only nurses licensed pursuant to the June 2006 Nurse Licensure Examination are eligible to register for the special review for Tests III and V. **Those whose licenses were cancelled, and were asked to retake Tests III and V pursuant to the Court of Appeals decision, are not eligible.**
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MS. HORTENSIA DE GUIA
Professional Regulation Commission
Registration Division
(02) 736-2248

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- The list of participating schools shall be regularly updated. View the changes online at **www.specialnursingreview.dole.gov.ph.** Note: The *Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila* (PLM) is not participating in this special review.

Those affected by changes are advised to revisit the website.

Leviste renews petition for gag order

By DJ Yap and Leila B. Salaverria

FORMER BATANGAS GOV. JOSE Antonio Leviste protested what he said was "trial by publicity," as he renewed his appeal for a gag order to bar government prosecutors from discussing his case in the media.

He mentioned in particular Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco who allegedly made improper comments "not only on the merits of the case but even on the accused himself."

Velasco, however, said he would oppose Leviste's petition. He said what he discussed in the media were actual events in court.

Forum

The former governor claimed the prosecution, particularly Velasco, was using the media as a forum to express "bare opinions, baseless theories and damaging accusations."

Leviste is facing murder charges for the death of longtime aide Rafael de Las Alas.

In his petition, Leviste asked Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 to resolve his earlier request for the gag order.

The earlier petition said it was important to stop the prosecution from its "contemptuous acts."

Undue publicity

In his latest motion dated March 20, Leviste submitted 87 newspaper clippings that he described as Velasco's "press releases" from Feb. 24 to March 17, purportedly giving undue publicity to the case.

Leviste was arraigned Wednesday but refused to enter a plea, citing his petition with the Court of Appeals questioning the upgrading of his case from homicide to murder.

Alameda then entered a "not guilty" plea for the accused.

Transparency

Defending the media coverage, Velasco said: "There is a need for transparency because the people have the right to know how every criminal case is being prosecuted."

He said the gag order would violate press freedom.

The prosecutor said Leviste had nothing to fear if he had nothing to hide.

At the same time Velasco asked the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to investigate Leviste in case anything happened to him and his fellow prosecutors in the case, Romeo Senson and Diosdado Solidum.

In a March 21 letter to NBI Director Nestor Mantaring, Velasco claimed Leviste threatened him in open court Wednesday during the hearing of the

Leviste allegedly shouted at Velasco, and told him to stop whatever he was doing, saying: *"Tumigil ka na d'yan! Makakaganti rin ako sa iyo* (Stop it now! I will get even with you)."

Photographs

Velasco added that Leviste ordered his personal photographer, identified as Dominador Llanes, to take pictures of the prosecutor, his security escorts and members of the Volunteers against Crime and Corruption (VACC).

On the same day, Leviste reportedly had a tense encounter with two women VACC coordinators.

At about 11 a.m., Leviste reportedly approached the women to ask, "Do you know what you're doing here? *Gusto niyo rin ba ng babagan* (Do you also want a fight)?" ("Babagan" is Batangueño slang for fistfight.)

Velasco later asked that the incidents be put on record.

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Pillbox blast rocks QC school; no one hurt

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A PILLBOX EXPLODED YESTERDAY MORNING inside a school compound in Quezon City, throwing officials and students of the Our Lord's Grace Montessori (OLGM) in a state of panic.

Hernilio Baradi, OLGM registrar and prefect of discipline, said the blast came a day after the school's owner issued announcements to parents regarding a decision to stop receiving new students for the next school year.

Baradi told the INQUIRER that the explosion happened at around 8:30 a.m. yesterday, inside the OLGM compound along Commonwealth Avenue in Barangay Batasan Hills.

The watchman on duty reportedly found a small orange paper bag at the main gates of the school, investigators said.

The guard, whom Baradi did not identify, picked up the bag to bring it to the lost and found department located at the school's guidance counselor's office.

On his way to the office, the guard said he heard a ticking sound and immediately threw the bag in a garbage bin located at a vacant lot behind the campus main building. Shortly after, the package exploded. No one was hurt, however, and there was minimal damage to property.

Responding elements of the Special Weapons and Tactics Explosives and Ordnance Division (SWAT-EOD) said the explosive used was a pillbox composed only of black powder without any shrapnel.

Baradi revealed that it was the first time that such an incident happened on the school premises.

DID YOU KNOW

THE FIRST Filipino archbishop of Manila, Gabriel M. Reyes, was born on March 24, 1891 in Kalibo, Aklan. He headed the archdiocese from 1949 to 1952. Among his achievements was the establishment of the San Carlos Seminary in Guadalupe, Makati City. Reyes died on Oct. 10, 1952. He was succeeded by Rufino Cardinal Santos, Jaime Cardinal Sin and Gaudencio Rosales, the current Manila archbishop.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

METROBRIEFS

Hot stuff seized

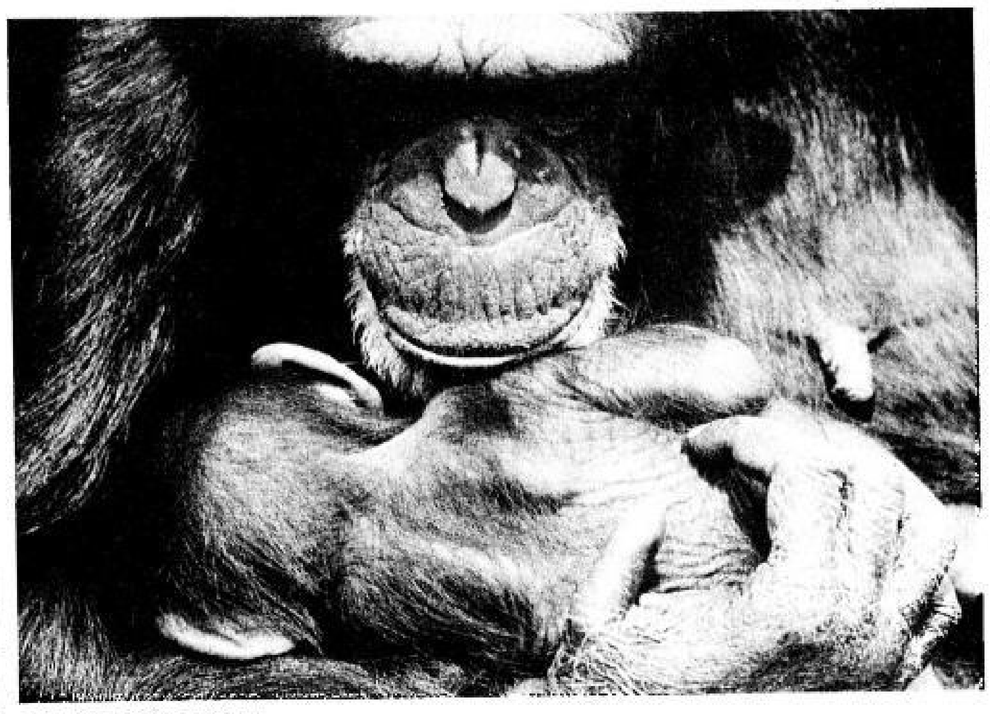
ABOUT 960 bottles containing solvent substance ready for distribution were seized by Manila Police's Special Operations Group (SOG) yesterday in a raid at a house in Tondo, Manila. The SOG said the bottles were sold at P60 each to "sniffing boys" loitering along the Baywalk area on Roxas Boulevard. SPO4 Victorino Batara said that in addition to the bottles, they recovered about 10 gallons of the volatile substance in two plastic containers from Antonio Tenegra and Roda Lacala of St. Jude/Kagitingan Street in Tondo, Manila. Batara said solvent was primarily used in ships for removing rust, but the ones they found in Tondo were mostly packed and ready for selling. He said boys aged 12-15 put drops of solvent on handkerchiefs before inhaling it. "The solvent puts them in a state where their reasoning is disrupted. In a matter of minutes, they become fearless enough to create scandals and commit petty crimes," he said. Street pushers, Batara said, got their supply from the house raided in Tondo. The boys will be brought to the Department of Social Welfare and Development for rehabilitation, police added. Asked if the suspects might not have known the bottles were peddled to minors, Batara said the mere packaging of the solvent in bottles indicated that the suspects were aware these were sold. Tenegra and Lacala were arrested and charged with violation of P.D. 619 or possession of volatile substances.

Allison W. Lopez

Solon loses campaign funds

MALABON-NAVOTAS Rep. Ricky Sandoval lost P240,000 in campaign money to motorcycle-riding robbers when his employees were held up in broad daylight a stone's throw away from a police precinct in Navotas yesterday morning. P03 Dante Majadas identified the lawmaker's staff members as Erwin Macapagal Fernando and Renato Salvador Gutierrez. "The money was to be used to pay for the lawmaker's campaign materials," said Alex Rosete, Sandoval's information officer. Rosete told the INQUIRER that the money was supposed to pay for shirts, caps and other campaign giveaways of the congressman. Sandoval, who is on his third term as congressman, had earlier announced his intention to run against incumbent Mayor Toby Tiangco. The victims were on board a white Pajero owned by the lawmaker's family and were traveling along M.Naval Road, Navotas East when they were blocked by three men on board a 250 CC Motocross DT. "A responding police officer who noticed a commotion immediately pursued the robbers, but the suspects easily outraced their pursuers," Majadas said. The victims had just withdrawn money from the H. Lopez Metrobank branch in Tondo when the robbers struck. According to the police, this was the second robbery case involving the same branch.

Nancy C. Carvajal



MOTHER'S CARE
Jodi, a mother chimpanzee, holds her 1-month-old baby at the Tulsa Zoo in Tulsa, Okla., March 21. AP

More illegals in US resort to identity theft to get jobs

MARSHALLTOWN, IOWA—THE TWO women named Violeta Blanco have never met. But for a long time they shared not only a name, but the same birth date and the same Social Security number.

One is an illegal immigrant from Mexico who went to work in a meatpacking plant here after her husband left her and their three children. The other is an American, a single mother in California who has never held a job, struggles with drug addiction and is fighting to keep the state from taking her children.

Detained in a raid on the Iowa plant, the Mexican worker, Eloisa Nunez Galeana, admitted that she had used the identity of Violeta Blanco, 31, of Bakersfield, Calif., to get a job. Now she is in jail on felony charges of identity theft, her trial is set to begin in Des Moines on Monday.

Immigration raids at six Swift & Co. meat-packing plants in six states in December, as well as more recent sweeps in Michigan, Florida and Arizona, have exposed an expanding front in the underground business of procuring bona fide documents for illegal immigrants seeking work, officials say.

With scrutiny tightening, illegal immigrants "invest more effort and money into getting better documents," said Julie L. Myers, the top official at Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "More and more, that includes taking on the identities of US citizens and legal immigrants."

Of 1,282 illegal immigrants detained in the Swift raids, the majority were charged with civil immigration violations and quickly deported. But federal prosecutors brought identity-theft charges against 148 of the workers.

Court papers show that the accused did not use stolen documents to loot bank accounts or credit cards, the primary crimes that identity-theft laws seek to attack. Instead, they used the birth certificates and Social Security cards to get jobs.

Still, Matthew C. Allen, the senior investigations official at Immigration and Custom Enforcement, said that 326 Americans had reported financial complications and tax liabilities from having their identities used at Swift. *NYT*

WORLDBRIEFS

Brain injury changes moral judgment, say scientists

DAMAGE to an area of the brain behind the forehead, inches behind the eyes, transforms the way people make moral judgments in life-or-death situations, scientists are reporting Thursday. In a new study, people with this rare injury expressed increased willingness to kill or harm another person if doing so would save others' lives. The researchers emphasize that the study was small and that the moral decisions were hypothetical; the results cannot predict how people with or without brain injuries will act in real life-or-death situations. Yet the findings, appearing online on Wednesday, in the journal Nature, confirm the central role of the damaged region—the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, which is thought to generate social emotions, like compassion. Previous studies showed that this region was active during moral decision-making, and that damage to it and neighboring areas from severe dementia affected moral judgments. The finding could have implications for legal cases. Jurors have reduced sentences based on brain-imaging results showing damage. ***NYT***

US House approves subpoena of Bush aides over firings

WASHINGTON—The inquiry into the firing of eight federal prosecutors threatened Wednesday to widen into a constitutional confrontation as a House panel authorized subpoenas requiring Karl Rove and senior Bush administration officials to testify under oath. The White House dug in against the demand, although Democrats in Congress held out hope for a compromise. While members of a House judiciary subcommittee approved the subpoenas for Rove and four others, they did not issue them, saying they still hoped to avoid a showdown over separation of powers. The White House said the offer it made Tuesday was final: to allow Rove and others to be interviewed in private without having to take an oath or having the session transcribed. "If they issue subpoenas, the offer is withdrawn," President Bush's press secretary, Tony Snow, declared Tuesday, though he quickly tried to shift the onus onto Democrats by saying that the issuing of subpoenas would make the offer moot. He said the administration still hoped Democrats would come around and accept what he repeatedly described as an "extraordinarily generous offer." ***NYT***

Italy says it exchanged 5 jailed Taliban for hostage

ROME—An Italian journalist who was held hostage for 15 days by the Taliban in lawless southern Afghanistan was ransomed for five Taliban prisoners, the Italian government and Afghan officials confirmed Wednesday. It appears to be the first time prisoners have been openly exchanged for a hostage in the wars that the United States and its allies are fighting there and in Iraq, and the move drew immediate criticism from Washington and London, and from other European capitals. "We don't negotiate with terrorists, and we don't advise others to do so either," said the State Department spokesperson, Sean McCormack. A senior Bush administration official said the prisoners exchanged had been held by the Afghan government, not by Nato, which is directing the allied military in Afghanistan. The official said he did not believe that Nato officials in Afghanistan had been formally alerted before the exchange. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with the Italian foreign minister, Massimo D'Alema, in Washington on Monday, the day the hostage, Daniele Mastrogiacomo, 52, of the leftist newspaper La Repubblica, was released. It was not clear whether they discussed an exchange. ***NYT***

Hamas, Fatah fighters clash in Gaza; 1 killed

GAZA—A militant loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction was killed and seven people were wounded on Wednesday in the first deadly clash between Fatah and Hamas since a unity government was formed. Within hours, two Palestinians linked to Hamas were abducted in Gaza City in a sign violence could spread despite the new coalition's stated aim of ending factional strife and closing ranks against a crippling year-old Western aid embargo. It was the first deadly clash since Abbas's secular Fatah faction and Hamas Islamists formed a unity cabinet on Saturday. ***Reuters***

Russia mourns dead after trio of disasters

ULYANOVSKAYA MINE, RUSSIA—Flags flew at half mast across Russia on Wednesday and entertainment programs were cancelled as the country mourned a trio of disasters which claimed at least 177 lives. Rescuers at the scene of the worst disaster, in a Siberian coal mine, said they had little hope of finding any more survivors, two days after a huge gas blast ripped through its underground tunnels, killing at least 108. "Rescue work is still continuing ... but I can tell you we don't expect to find any survivors," Vladimir Berezovsky, a local Emergencies Ministry official, said. ***Reuters***

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UN Council debates Iran sanctions draft

UNITED NATIONS—THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL began bargaining Wednesday over a new Iran sanctions resolution ahead of a vote to be attended by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad possibly later in the week.

Responding to Iran's continued refusal to halt sensitive nuclear fuel work, the draft bans Tehran from exporting arms, calls for voluntary trade sanctions and expands a list of officials and companies targeted for financial and travel restrictions, toughening sanctions already imposed in December.

The draft was presented last week to the council's 10 non-permanent members after being agreed by the council's five veto-wielding members (P5)—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—plus Germany.

"In the light of the discussions today we will decide how we are going to proceed," said Britain's ambassador Emyr Jones Parry, one of the co-sponsors of the draft.

Separately, US Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns said he hoped the resolution would act as a "vise" that would start to isolate Tehran from the rest of the world and force Iran to "think twice" about its options.

But as experts from the council's 15 members huddled Wednesday to tackle the sanctions proposal, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei remained defiant.

Iran "will use all its capabilities to respond to threats and to the use of force and violence," he warned in a nationally televised speech to his country.

"If they want to use threats, to resort to force and violence, then without a doubt the people and the authorities will use all their capabilities to strike the enemies," Khamenei said from the holy city of Mashhad.

Iran's UN envoy rejected the idea, put forth by some diplomats, of a concurrent suspension of sanctions and Tehran's uranium enrichment as a way to defuse his country's nuclear showdown with the Security Council.

"Suspension, in the best-case scenario is a two month band-aid. What would happen at the end of two months?" the ambassador Javad Zarif said, addressing a policy conference on Iran by video link to the US capital.

As the meetings began in New York, Western sponsors signaled their readiness to accept some minor amendments to the sanctions draft offered by South Africa, Qatar and Indonesia. *AFP*

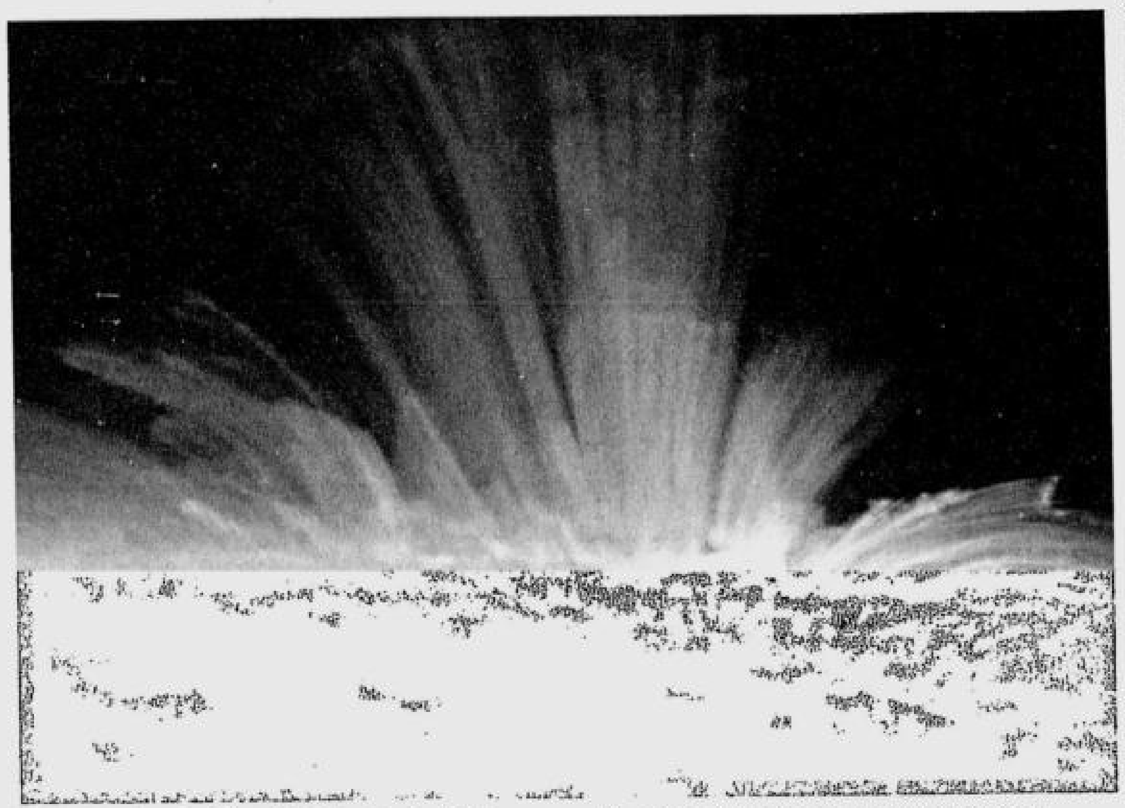

IMAGE taken by Hinode's Solar Optical Telescope on Nov. 20, 2006. Hinode is an international mission to study our nearest star, the sun. The image reveals the structure of the solar magnetic field rising vertically from a sunspot.

AP

N. Korea nuke talks grind to a halt

BEIJING—DEADLOCKED TALKS on North Korea's nuclear program ground to a halt on Thursday, with the North Korean and Russian envoys both leaving for the airport after four days of negotiations that went nowhere.

North Korea has avoided discussing a February deal to shut its main nuclear reactor by mid-April since the talks began on Monday, demanding that $25 million frozen in a Macau bank first be transferred to a bank in Beijing.

North Korean envoy Kim Kye-gwan did not talk to reporters as he entered the airport to catch one of the three scheduled weekly flights to Pyongyang from Beijing.

The exasperated US envoy, Christopher Hill, said the delay in the transfer from Macau's Banco Delta Asia (BDA) needed to be overcome.

"The day I'm able to explain to you North Korean thinking is probably the day I've been in this process too long," he told reporters as he stepped out for talks with China's envoy, Wu Dawei. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is the North's formal name.

Yasuhisa Shiozaki, Japan's chief cabinet secretary, also expressed his frustration at the foot-dragging on the bank issue in which the funds are due to be transferred to a North Korean account with the Bank of China.

"It's a shame to use this as a reason to not take part in negotiations for two days. It's really a waste, especially with everyone gathered there," he told a news conference in Tokyo.

Washington said on Monday it had ended an investigation into the Macau bank, accused of harboring North Korean earnings from international crime, which had prompted Macau authorities to take over the bank and freeze the accounts.

As part of the February disarmament deal, the United States agreed to resolve North Korea's complaints about the financial crackdown within 30 days. *Reuters*

Gore urges US response to climate crisis

WASHINGTON—IT WAS PART science class, part policy wonk paradise, part politics and all theater as former Vice President Al Gore came to Congress on Wednesday to insist that global warming constitutes a "planetary emergency" requiring an aggressive federal response.

Gore delivered the same blunt message to a joint meeting of two House subcommittees in the morning and a Senate panel in the afternoon: Humans are artificially warming the world, the risks of inaction are great, and meaningful cuts in emissions linked to warming will happen only if the United States takes the lead.

Gore resorted to a simple metaphor to make his point. "The planet has a fever. If your baby has a fever, you go to the doctor." He added, "If the doctor says you need to intervene here, you don't say, 'I read a science fiction novel that says it's not a problem.' You take action."

Instead of challenging the science, many Republicans focused on strategic questions of how to attack the problem in the United States, tending to favor nuclear power and asking what to do about the emissions of large developing economies like China and India.

Gore proposed a tax on carbon emissions, a ban on incandescent light bulbs and another on new coal-fired power plants. *NYT*

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Injunction denied; Solis a no-show at press con

IT'S GO FOR THE MANny Pacquiao-Jorge Solis clash on April 14 in San Antonio, Texas.

This after a Las Vegas court yesterday denied the petition of Golden Boy Promotions for a preliminary injunction against the fight which Pacquiao has to win to secure a mandatory title crack at new World Boxing Council super featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez later in the year.

It was learned that the injunction was denied because the court could not, as of this time, ascertain as to who holds the promotional rights to Pacquiao between Oscar De La Hoya's GBP and Bob Arum's Top Rank.

GBP claims the Filipino fighter had signed a seven-fight deal with the promotional outfit in September before signing yet another contract with Top Rank after beating Erik Morales in November.

"Oscar should be ashamed of himself," promoter Arum told fightnews.com. "He's making a tremendous amount of money fighting on May 5 (against Floyd Mayweather Jr.). How can he try to stop Manny Pacquiao from making a living?"

ALL SET for fight night: Brian Viloria (left), Manny Pacquiao (center) and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. are all smiles after the press conference.

Arum said GBP is free to seek compensation in court after the fight. He also added that Filipino fight fans may not take the incident lightly.

"He has himself to blame if Filipinos don't buy his pay-per-view (fight on May 5)," he said.

Meanwhile, Mexican Jorge Solis was a no-show at yesterday's press conference arranged by Top Rank for what has been billed as the "Blaze of Glory" card.

According to Top Rank publicist Ricardo Jimenez, Solis was still stuck at the US consulate in Guadalajara applying for a US visa.

Only Arum, Pacquiao, Fil-Am and former WBC light flyweight champion Brian Viloria and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. showed up during the press conference held in a "small and cramped" room of the Palms Restaurant in West Hollywood.

Pacquiao vowed to "put up a good fight for everybody to enjoy." *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

SUMMER ACTION
Mike Alinsunurin of Adamson dives for the ball as teammate Sherwin Meneses looks during the Luzon elimination of the Nestea beach volleyball tournament. *Story on A26.* ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Ginebra turns back Coke; Purefoods battles Air21

BARANGAY GINEBRA ROLLED TO ITS third straight win last night, getting 26 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists from Rod Nealy in a 101-97 PBA Fiesta Cup victory over Coca-Cola last night at The Arena in San Juan.

Ginebra came up with two crucial scoring bursts late in the fourth before outsteadying the Tigers in the endgame to match the tournament's longest winning streak while climbing into a tie with idle Red Bull and Alaska for second spot at 3-1.

The Tigers, who got 32 points from Anthony Johnson, lost for the second times in five games but not after battling the formidable Gin Kings tooth and nail the entire night.

In his brightest offensive performance while taking over quarterbacking chores for Jayjay Helterbrand, former MVP Johnny Abarrientos tossed in 16 points and was among four Ginebra locals in twin digits.

Meanwhile, Marquin Chandler hopes to return to full form today when Purefoods battles Air21.

Chandler returned with aplomb on Wednesday night, his performance nothing short of spectacular.

But he was the least impressed of what he did even if he has made Purefoods look fearsome overnight.

"You'll know I'm back in 100 percent shape when I hit 40 (points)," the prolific import said after guiding the Tender Juicy Giants to a 79-77 decision of San Miguel for its first win. "What we saw was that we will keep fighting."

Gametime is at 4:35 p.m. at the Cuneta Astrodome with the Giants expected to again play with renewed vigor under the leadership of Chandler, who returned ahead of schedule and still playing with some pain. Musong R. Castillo

GAMES TODAY (Cuneta Astrodome)
4:35 p.m.—Air21 vs. Purefoods
7:20 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs. Red Bull

The scores:

BARANGAY GINEBRA 101—Nealy 26, Abarrientos 16, Salvacion 14, Macapagal 13, Menk 10, Hatfield 9, Echavez 7, Tubid 6, Mamaril 0.

COCA-COLA 97—Johnson 32, Arigo 13, Peek 12, Avendio 8, Tolomia 8, Miranda 7, Williams 6, Yeo 5, Misolas 4, Caceres 2.

Quarters: 29-33, 55-55, 78-78, 101-97

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Collegiate champs dominate beach volley

By June Navarro

THE LUZON QUALIFYING OF THE 2007 Nestea Beach Volleyball has turned into a battleground of champions among the country's premiere collegiate leagues.

UAAP titleholder Adamson University and reigning NCAA champion Philippine Christian University downed separate rivals yesterday at the La Salle Greenhills sand court to move a win shy of going to Boracay.

Adamson's Hannah Suarez and Rissa Jane Laguilles got the needed breaks at the end of both sets to prevail, 22-20, 22-20, over Wendy Anne Semana and Lorelin Astorga of Far Eastern University.

Cathlea Villaluz and Arlene Bernardo of PCU took the longer route before reasserting their mastery over Letran's Bangladesh Pantaleon and Joy Gazelle, 23-21, 19-21, 15-12, to join the UAAP champions in the semifinals.

"We hardly trained for this. But our morale is high since we're coming in fresh from the NCAA beach volley championships," said Villaluz, who, along with NCAA MVP Bernardo, is in her final year of eligibility.

Mike Alinsunurin and Sherwin Meneses also kept Adamson's banner flying in the men's division after surviving FEU's Joshua Alcarde and Jeremy Floyd Pedregosa, 21-16, 23-21, to nail a semifinal slot.

Though the defending champions are considered a cut above the rest, Alinsunurin and Meneses are not easing up.

"You can't be sure until you reach the Finals," said Alinsunurin. "There are a lot of tough opponents out there. You can never tell."

Alinsunurin and Meneses are going for a back-to-back championship in the tournament sponsored by Speedo, Mikasa, Boracay Gold Crowne Club, Microtel Inns and Suites Boracay, Hey! Jude, D' Mall, Boracay Mandarin Island Hotel, Schering Plough Coppertone and Crystal Sand.

The top three squads in the men's and women's division will advance to the Boracay national championships on April 19-21 where they will be joined by three teams each from the Visayas and Mindanao.

RP remains 3rd; Ardina running 5th

By Musong R. Castillo

STA. ROSA, LAGUNA—DOTTIE ARDINA has conceded defeat, but not all is lost for the youthful Philippine team in the 29th Queen Sirikit Cup.

Ardina fired a two-under-par 70 and led the Philippines to another 143 output that kept the hosts in third spot, just three behind second-running Japan but 13 off the talented Korean team that all but put this tournament in the bag.

Ryu So-yeon and Choi He-yong fired identical 67s for a 134 total for the day and a 273 tally, 15-under and 10 shots ahead of new pursuer Japan, which got the round of the tournament, a 65, from Rikako Morita.

Doha Asian Games gold medalist Ryu was flawless, gunning down four of her five birds in a six-hole stretch opening her back side, while Choi had seven birdies, four of them on the front nine, against two bogeys.

With Regina de Guzman contributing a 73, the Filipinos stood a clear two shots ahead of Australia with a 36-hole 286 aggregate at The Country Club here, to stay on course at duplicating or even surpassing their best-ever finish in this 14-nation event.

No Philippine team has finished higher than third in this annual event and no Filipina since Jennifer Rosales has ever finished in the top five of individual play.

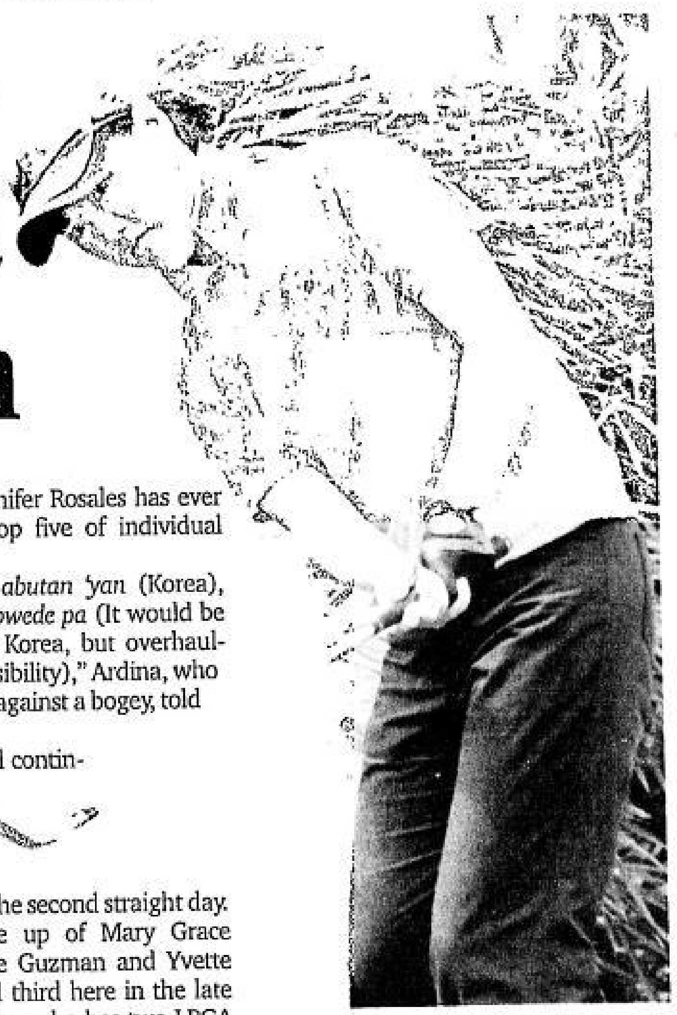
"*Malabo nang abutan 'yan* (Korea), *pero yung* Japan *pwede pa* (It would be difficult catching Korea, but overhauling Japan is a possibility)," Ardina, who had three birdies against a bogey, told the INQUIRER.

Crystal Superal continued to struggle, this time carding an 82 that did count for RP for the second straight day.

A team made up of Mary Grace Estuesta, Lina de Guzman and Yvette De Leon finished third here in the late 1980s and Rosales, who has two LPGA victories to her credit so far, finished fifth when the Philippines last hosted this event in 1997 at Southwoods.

The Aussies couldn't get it going, getting just a level 72 from Emma Bennet and a 76 from Stephanie Na for a 148 that gave them an even 288 heading into the final 18 holes today.

New Zealand, the runner-up to Chinese-Taipei last year, also slipped, dropping to fifth at 290 after a 146 built around Dasom Lee's 71. Natasha Krishna was the Kiwis' second best scorer with a 75.



RYU SO-YEON of Korea pitches to the No. 4 green. RYAN LIM

Ardina is running fifth in individual play with a 142, six shots behind Ryu, who continued to hold a one-stroke lead over compatriot Choi.

The 54-hole event is being backed by Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, ICTSI, San Miguel, Pagcor, PCSO, PSC, Comworks, Bancom, TNT Express, Pacsports, Electrobus Consolidated/Callaway, Department of Tourism and Creative Synergy.

Peping offers way out for liquidation woes of NSAs

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE HAS offered a sure-fire solution to the liquidation woes of the national sports associations with the Philippine Sports Commission: Let them off the hook.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. yesterday suggested that absolving the NSAs of their financial liabilities with the sports government agency would be the best option to solve the problem.

"There's no way of really liquidating those expenses," said Cojuangco, referring to the monetary assistance given by the PSC to the NSAs.

A study done by the Commission on Audit last year showed that several NSAs have received a total of P80 million from the government which has yet to be liquidated.

The trouble is many officials from the NSAs who received the monetary doleouts from the PSC are no longer connected with the organization. The officials presently running the show in those NSAs are now forced to account for funds they have not spent.

A case in point is cycling which is being asked to liquidate at least P2 million given to the Philippine Amateur Cycling Association (Paca) then headed by lawyer Jun Regalo.

Philcycling replaced Paca three years ago as the national association for cycling with Air21 owner Bert Lina as head.

"I pity these officials. Perhaps, we could approach (PSC) chair (Butch) Ramirez and ask for amnesty," said Cojuangco.

NCAA mancom to probe PCU ineligibility case after all

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE ATHLETIC Association has decided to conduct a formal inquiry of alleged irregularites committed by Philippine Christian University just two weeks after the season ended with the Dolphins emerging as general champions.

The NCAA management committee (mancom) announced yesterday it has gathered enough individual complaints to probe PCU's alleged fielding of ineligible players in various sports disciplines, especially in high school basketball.

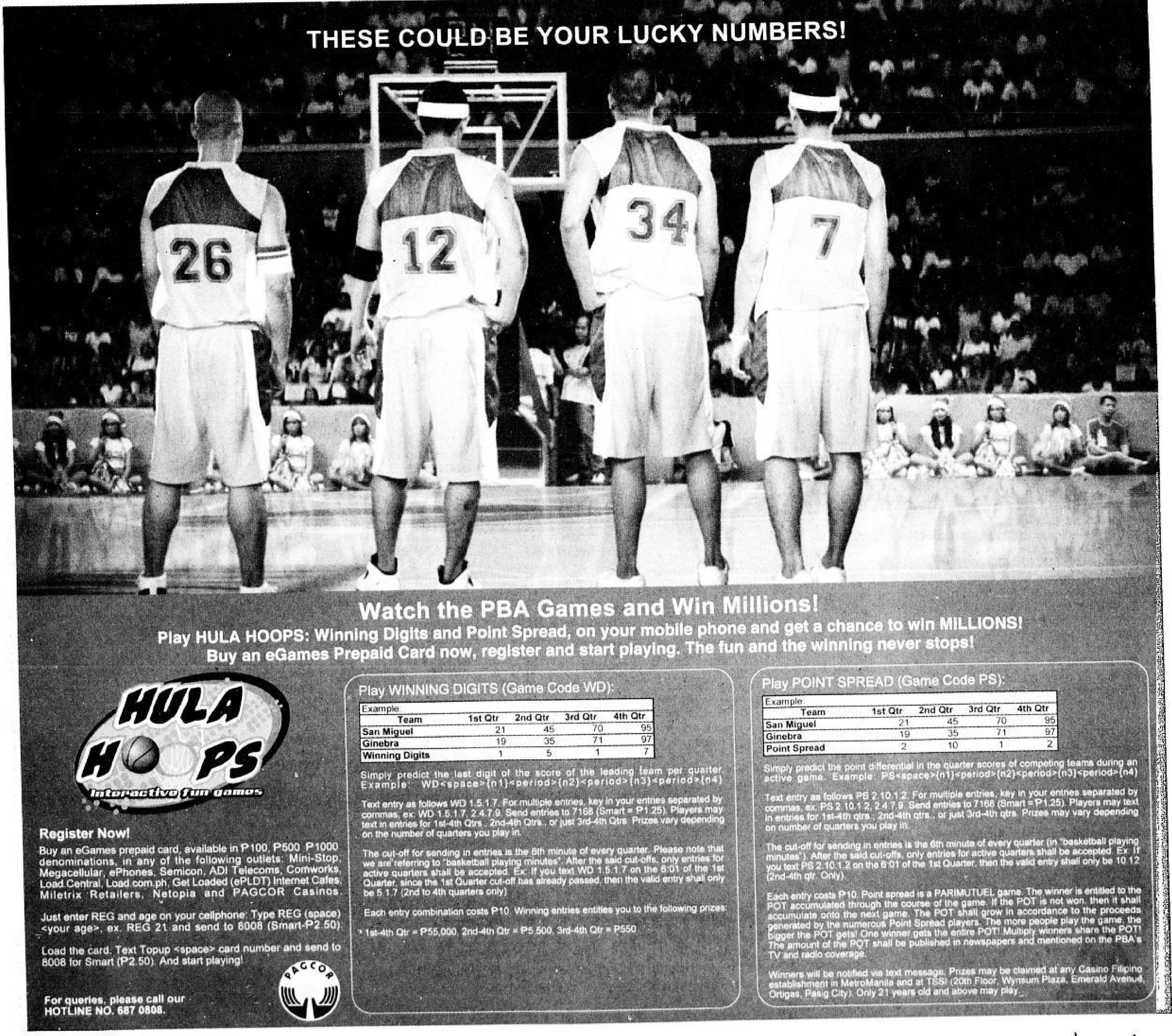
"We hope to get into the bottom of this as soon as possible," said outgoing mancom chair Henry Atayde of St. Benilde. "I hope it's not true and PCU will come out vindicated after this."

Atayde maintained that there is no formal complaint from any of the member schools but the mancom has been getting anonymous complaints through text messages and decided to create two committees to check on the claims.

"We hope to come up with the findings two weeks after the Holy Week," said Atayde who presided over the hosting turnover ceremony from St. Benilde to Jose Rizal University yesterday.

If proven guilty, PCU could face stiff penalties depending on the decision of the mancom and league policy board. Atayde said there is no league rule that readily slaps suspension against guilty member-schools.

Last year, the UAAP imposed a one-year ban against La Salle for using ineligible players in the senior basketball games.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Example

Team	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr
San Miguel	21	45	70	95
Ginebra	19	35	71	97
Winning Digits	1	5	1	7

Simply predict the last digit of the score of the leading team per quarter. Example: WD<space>{n1}<period>{n2}<period>{n3}<period>{n4}

Text entry as follows WD 1.5.1.7. For multiple entries, key in your entries separated by commas, ex: WD 1.5.1.7, 2.4.7.9. Send entries to 7168 (Smart = ₱1.25). Players may text in entries for 1st-4th Qtrs., 2nd-4th Qtrs., or just 3rd-4th Qtrs. Prizes vary depending on the number of quarters you play in.

The cut-off for sending in entries is the 6th minute of every quarter. Please note that we are referring to "basketball playing minutes". After the said cut-offs, only entries for active quarters shall be accepted. Ex: If you text WD 1.5.1.7 on the 6:01 of the 1st Quarter, since the 1st Quarter cut-off has already passed, then the valid entry shall only be 5.1.7 (2nd to 4th quarters only)

Each entry combination costs ₱10. Winning entries entitles you to the following prizes:

* 1st-4th Qtr = ₱55,000, 2nd-4th Qtr = ₱5,500, 3rd-4th Qtr = ₱550

Play POINT SPREAD (Game Code PS):

Example

Team	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr
San Miguel	21	45	70	95
Ginebra	19	35	71	97
Point Spread	2	10	1	2

Simply predict the point differential in the quarter scores of competing teams during an active game. Example: PS<space>{n1}<period>{n2}<period>{n3}<period>{n4}

Text entry as follows PS 2.10.1.2. For multiple entries, key in your entries separated by commas, ex. PS 2.10.1.2, 2.4.7.9. Send entries to 7168 (Smart = ₱1.25). Players may text in entries for 1st-4th qtrs., 2nd-4th qtrs., or just 3rd-4th qtrs. Prizes may vary depending on number of quarters you play in.

The cut-off for sending in entries is the 6th minute of every quarter (in "basketball playing minutes"). After the said cut-offs, only entries for active quarters shall be accepted. Ex: If you text PS 2.10.1.2 on the 6:01 of the 1st Quarter, then the valid entry shall only be 10.1.2 (2nd-4th qtr. Only).

Each entry costs ₱10. Point spread is a PARIMUTUEL game. The winner is entitled to the POT accumulated through the course of the game. If the POT is not won, then it shall accumulate onto the next game. The POT shall grow in accordance to the proceeds generated by the numerous Point Spread players. The more people play the game, the bigger the POT gets! One winner gets the entire POT! Multiply winners share the POT! The amount of the POT shall be published in newspapers and mentioned on the PBA's TV and radio coverage.

Winners will be notified via text message. Prizes may be claimed at any Casino Filipino establishment in MetroManila and at TSSI (20th Floor, Wynsum Plaza, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas, Pasig City). Only 21 years old and above may play.

PAGCOR

Spring rips Mail & More

TWO-TIME CHAMPION SPRING Cooking Oil shrugged off the challenge of Mail & More/Federal Tyres, 60-49, for its fifth straight win in the 2007 Picaa Open basketball tournament at the Lyceum gym.

Rodel Mallari, Nino Marquez, Ryan Regalado and Welland Muñoz joined forces as the Cooking Oil Masters of national shooting champion Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla unloaded a 12-5 bomb in the last four minutes to win comfortably.

Spring remains the only unbeaten team in the eight-team tourney.

Mallari eluded Mail & More's swarming defense to score five of his team-high 14 points in the crucial stretch.

Ronjay Buenafe led Mail & More with 19 markers.

UCM Auto Aircon/Lyceum subdued defending champion Pacific Supertex, 61-55, in the other game.

UCM blew a 17-point halftime lead but recovered in time to beat Pacific for its third victory in six games.

The scores:

SPRING 60—Mallari 14, Marquez 10, Regalado 9, Salud 9, Bolocon 5, Reyes 4, Munoz 4, Bamson 4, Tajonera 1.

MAIL & MORE 49—Buenafe 19, David 13, De Guzman 6, Masibang 6, Te 3, Reroma 2, Alminario 0, Manalo 0.

Quarters: 10-5, 30-23, 44-38, 60-49

Romero passes up PBA offer

'Harbour Centre-RP not yet a complete team'

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE OFFER SOUNDED TOO GOOD TO pass up.

But a reality check has forced Harbour Centre-Philippines to turn down the invitation of national team Chot Reyes to join the practice sessions of the all-pro squad.

Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero said the amateur players set to compete in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) Champions Cup in Jakarta still have "no semblance of their roles."

But Romero noted that Harbour Centre-Philippines may end up dispatching members of its coaching staff to observe the national team's drills and scrimmages at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center in Ateneo.

"We welcome the invitation of the PBA and we're very grateful to coach Chot and PBA commissioner (Noli) Eala in extending their help to the all-amateur RP team," said Romero. "However, the team is basically less than a week old. The players still have no semblance of their roles or even a sense of teamwork."

ROMERO

REYES

Harbour Centre-Philippines had only five days to schedule possible practice sessions with the star-studded national team before Reyes and his 11-man roster leave for a two-week basketball camp in the United States on Thursday.

"The boys are not yet ready this time," said Romero. "There's still a lot of work to be done. They came from different teams so they're still in the process of adjustment."

JC Intal, Jason Castro, Jojo Duncil and Marvin Cruz will lead the PBL selection that will see action in the Jakarta club tournament on April 9 to 13.

Nigerian center Julius Nwosu, a former NBA backup and PBA import, had been tapped to beef up the fledgling crew.

"The fact is, it's not yet a full team," said Romero. "Nwosu will only arrive this Saturday. But I'll tell our coaching group—the PBL coaches—to observe the national team's practice."

SPORTSWATCH

Checkmate weekly classes slated

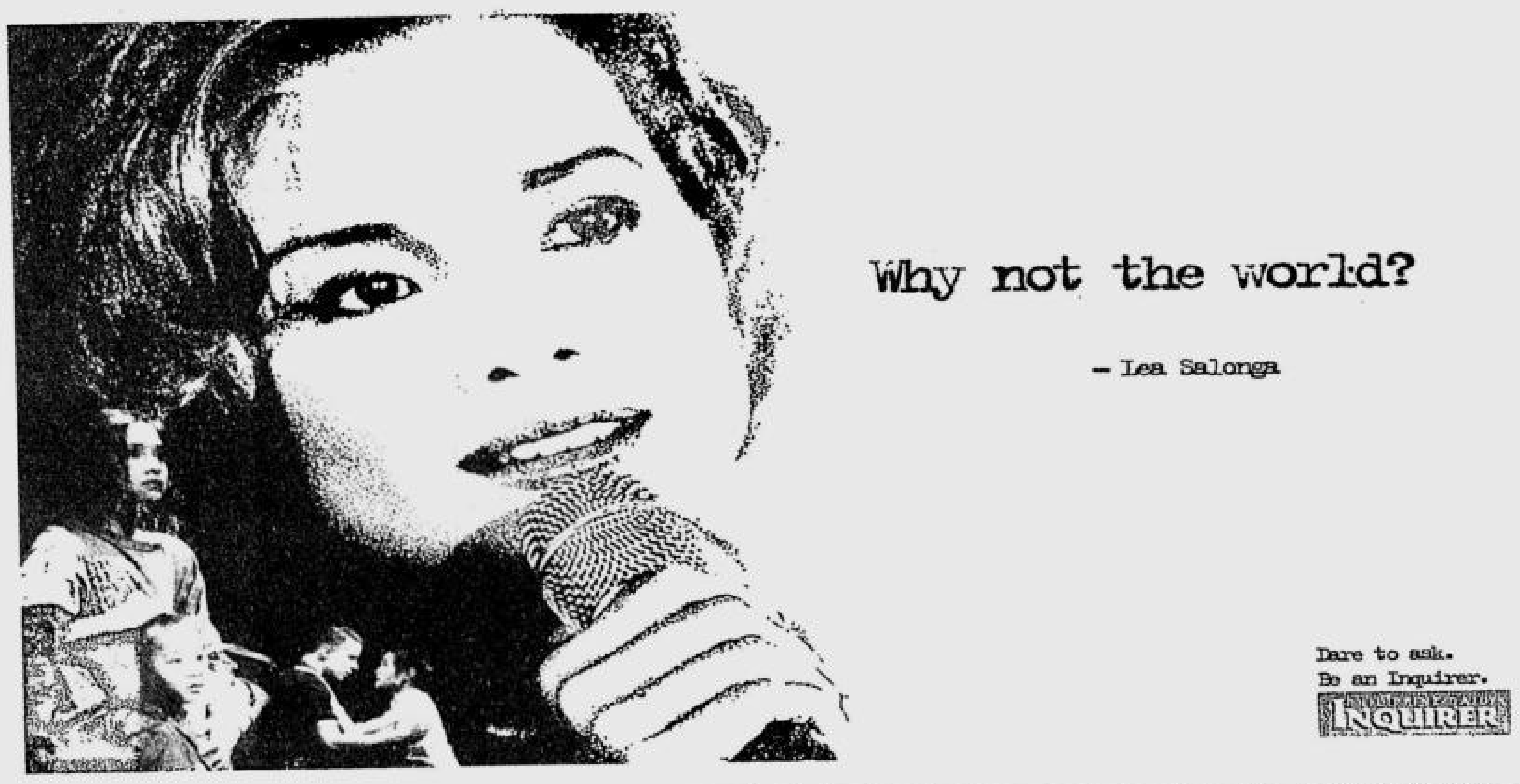
THE FIRST WEEKLY SERIES OF THE CHECKMATE SUMMER CHESS CLINICS sponsored by Milo starts on March 26, in six venues in Metro Manila. The venues are: Manila Central University, Caloocan City (8 a.m.-12 nn, Centennial Gym function room); San Beda College-Alabang (8 a.m.-12 nn, Sports Hall); Jollibee-Harrison Plaza (8 a.m.-12 nn); Walter Mart shopping complex, Makati (2-6 p.m. 3F); Chowking-Anonas, Quezon City (2-6 p.m. and Upper 2F), St. Francis Square, Mandaluyong (2-6 p.m.). Open to kids who are 5 years old and above, the clinics will be conducted daily from Monday to Saturday. Courses offered include preparatory, beginners, intermediate and advance. Provincial classes in Central and North Luzon will begin on March 31-April 4. For details, call MCC at 826-8560; 0916-852-1069 and 0916-6608-712.

5th leg of Pasay Cockers derby today

WITH NO OTHER DERBIES SCHEDULED IN METRO MANILA, ATTENTION WILL be focused at the Pasay City Cockpit today as the fifth leg of the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) 5-cock derby series blasts off at 6 p.m. More than 60 quality and non-stop matches are scheduled in the event backed by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. In the fourth PCCA derby last March 2, Pol Estrellado's PE entry emerged as solo champion with four wins and one loss. Meanwhile, Tony Lasala will host the TL San Luis 4-cock derby on March 30. The NCA 5-cock series returns on April 3. For inquiries: 8431890, 8431746 and 8166750.

Makati 5-cocker blasts off Monday

THE SIXTH LEG OF THE PINOY COCKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (PCAP) 5-cock derby series takes centerstage at Makati Coliseum this coming Monday, March 26. This one-day event, backed up by B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador, is part of PCAP's battle for the 2007 Cocker of the Year race . Entries must be submitted on Sunday, March 25, from 2 to 9 p.m. only. For additional info, please call 8963545 and 8956475. Meanwhile, this year's edition of the Makati Invitational 8-cock derby unfolds on May 28, 30 and June 1. Guaranteed prize is P3 million, with an entry fee of only P33,000 and a minimum bet of P22,000.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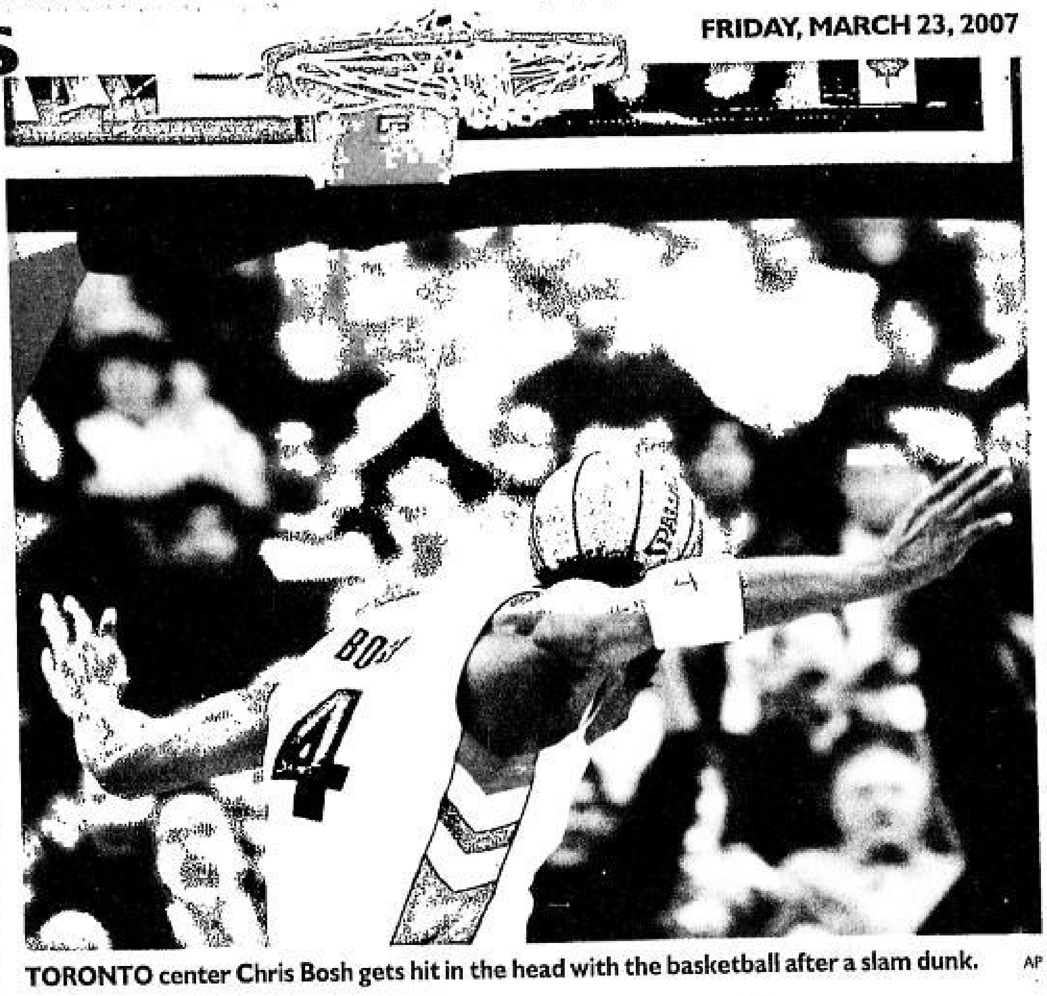


TORONTO center Chris Bosh gets hit in the head with the basketball after a slam dunk. AP

Mavs hold off Cavs as Nowitzki shines

NEW YORK—THE DALLAS MAVERICKS beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 98-90 on Wednesday to improve their NBA-best record to 56-11 with a fourth straight victory.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 23 points and Jason Terry 21 as the Mavericks improved to 3-0 on their six-game road trip, shooting 47 percent from the field and making all 17 free-throw attempts.

Nowitzki added nine rebounds for the Mavericks, who moved five games ahead of the Phoenix Suns in the overall standings and nine in front of San Antonio in the Southwest Division.

There are 15 games left in the regular season.

The Mavericks had five players in double-figures in scoring and four players with at least six rebounds. Nowitzki said that depth of squad was the reason his team leads the NBA.

"We have a lot of guys on this team who are capable of producing when somebody is having an off night," Nowitzki said. "That's why we are a great team, because other guys stepped up."

GAME TODAY (Basketball TV)
8:30 a.m.—Detroit vs. Houston
(replays @ 4 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.)

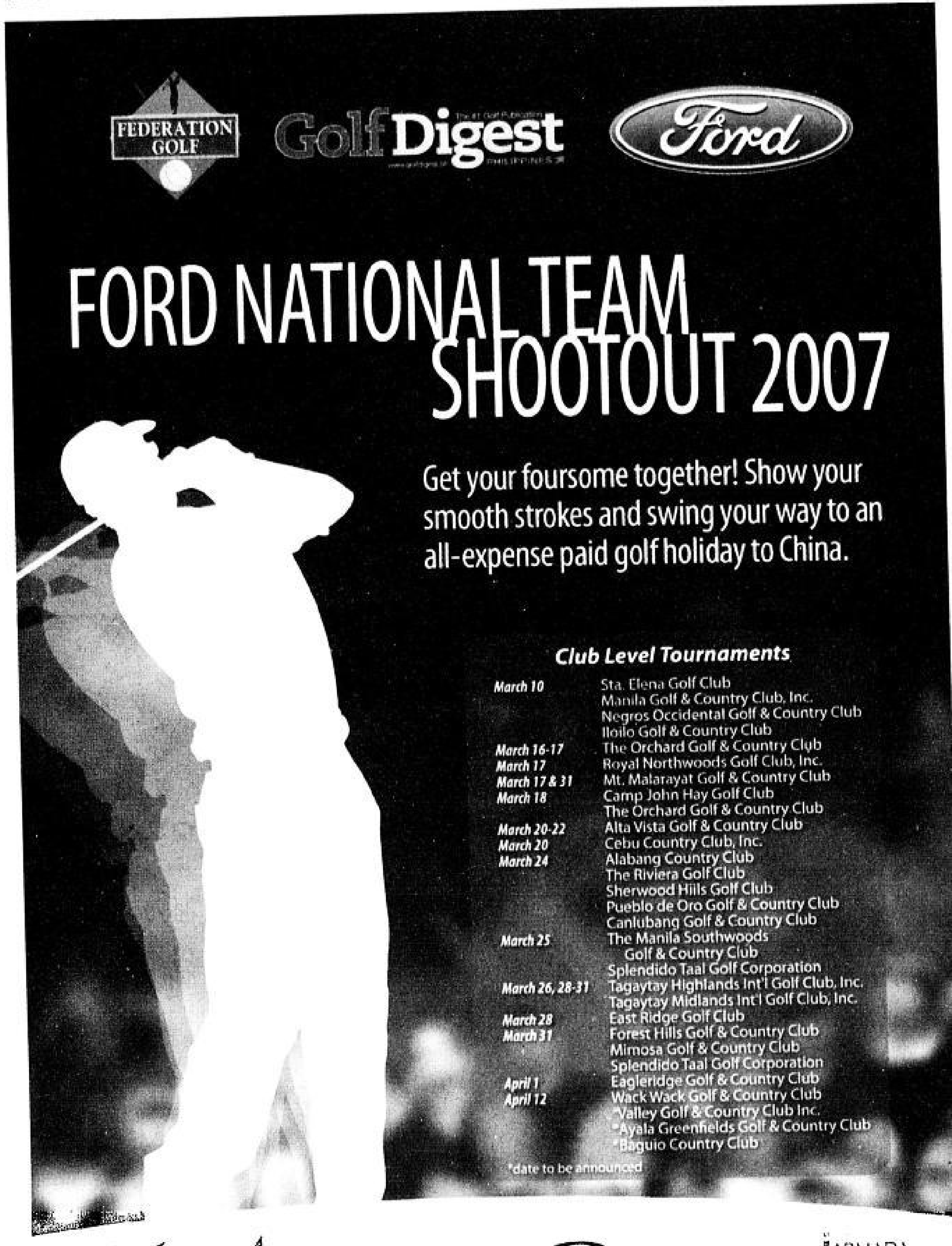
The Mavericks struggled in the first quarter and trailed 23-22, but took over for the rest of the game, piling up a 13-point lead after three quarters to beat the Cavaliers for the second time this month.

LeBron James led the Cavaliers with 31 points after shaking off a slow start.

Cleveland lost its second game in two nights after an eight-game winning streak, going down to a Western Conference opponent at home for just the second time in 14 games this season.

In other games, the Miami Heat won for the 10th time in 11 games, downing the Atlanta Hawks, 91-83.

Chris Bosh had 34 points and 16 rebounds as Toronto maintained its Atlantic Division lead with a 92-85 win over Orlando. *Reuters*



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March 16-17 The Orchard Golf & Country Club
March 17 Royal Northwoods Golf Club, Inc.
March 17 & 31 Mt. Malarayat Golf & Country Club
March 18 Camp John Hay Golf Club
The Orchard Golf & Country Club
March 20-22 Alta Vista Golf & Country Club
March 20 Cebu Country Club, Inc.
March 24 Alabang Country Club
The Riviera Golf Club
Sherwood Hills Golf Club
Pueblo de Oro Golf & Country Club
Canlubang Golf & Country Club
March 25 The Manila Southwoods Golf & Country Club
Splendido Taal Golf Corporation
March 26, 28-31 Tagaytay Highlands Int'l Golf Club, Inc.
Tagaytay Midlands Int'l Golf Club, Inc.
March 28 East Ridge Golf Club
March 31 Forest Hills Golf & Country Club
Mimosa Golf & Country Club
Splendido Taal Golf Corporation
April 1 Eagleridge Golf & Country Club
April 12 Wack Wack Golf & Country Club
*Valley Golf & Country Club Inc.
*Ayala Greenfields Golf & Country Club
*Baguio Country Club

*date to be announced

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Conference Programme

Tuesday, 27 March 2007
Welcome Address
Attorney Miguel Varela President of ManilaBulletin and Chairman Emeritus of the PhilippineChamber of Commerce and Industries, Philippines *Reiner Mittelbach, CEO, Ifra, Germany*
Keynote Presentation:Reinventing for Today's Business, Creating for Tomorrow's Challenges
•The monumental challenges facing the newspaper industry today
•Harnessing new technology to re-invent and re-structure
•Continuing to ensure high ethical standards and commitment to quality
Murdoch MacLennan, CEO, Telegraph Media Group, United Kingdom
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Session 1 Business and Strategy
Moderator : David O. Valdes, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Philippine Daily Inquirer,Philippines
A Strategy for Integration
•Synergies through coordination and cooperation of business areas•Cross promotional efforts
•Digital strategy, exploiting potential niches via community publications
David O. Valdes, Executive Vice President andChief Operating Officer, Philippine Daily Inquirer,Philippines
Parallel Session 1
Semi-Commercial Printing
Entering the Semi-Commercial Market
•Retro fitting presses
•Practical insights
Moderator: *Manfred Werfel, Research Director and Deputy CEO, Ifra, Germany*
An interactive panel discussion with the publishing community comprising of publishers, industry vendors and end users will be held at the end of the session.
Investment Models - CASH daily
•How the next generation of customers are presenting the media industry with new challenges
•First results after launching a world-premiere cross-media product
•'CASH daily', the information platform for those interested in business.
Thomas Trueb, Member of the Group Management,Ringier, Switzerland
Lunch, Expo Visit
Strategy for Staying Ahead: Product Diversification
•Why it makes sense to widen your portfolio of products
•Attracting new audiences
•Functioning business models
Siddharth Kothari, Director, Rajasthan Patrika, India
Parallel Session 2
Distribution Realities of Asia
Overview of challenges for Distribution and Circulation Management
•What are the options to address these challenges
•How can newspaper industry collectively accelerate transition from where they are today to where they should be
Case study - Magic of Beer Distribution
Panel discussion of Circulation and Distribution
Moderator *Cyril Pereira, Principal, Telesis Consulting Limited,Hong Kong*
A Strategy for Integrated Newsrooms
•Why publishers need to integrate•The challenges to overcome
•The convergence project at The Daily Telegraph
Dr. Dietmar Schantin, Director of Newsplex, Ifra, Germany
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Session 2 Digital Media
Launching a Community Site
•How to develop and market community sites
•Managing communities
•Creating synergies among other news channels
Chew V. Ming, Executive Content Producer,STOMP, Singapore Press Holdings, Singapore
Parallel Session 3
Change Management in the Newsroom
•The situation of change and re-organisation in newsrooms today
•How the success of re-organisation depends on good change management
•Examples of best practice and worst practice of change management in the newsroom
•Methods and tips to help increase acceptance of change
Sarah Schantin Williams, Associate Consultant,Ifra Newsplex, Germany
Search Engines Strategies for Newspapers
•New commercial and editorial arenas opened by search for an online news organization
•What search engines can tell you about your own site and your own readers
•Search engine optimization
Jo Christian Oterhals, Head of Development, VG Multimedia, Norway
Mobile Publishing
•"Made for Mobile" content: How the mobile customer is seeking exclusive differentiated content on his handset
•Moving from a product-centric thought process to a consumer-centric thought process
•Looking through the prism of a newspaper-driven media house
Saurav Sen, Head of Business - Telecoms &Internet, ABP Pvt Ltd, India
Closing Comments of first day
Welcome Dinner
Wednesday, 28 March 2007
Moderator: Jim Chisholm, Joint Principal, iMedia, France
Session 3 Advertising Strategies
Building Across Media Advertising Strategies
•How to structure sales strategy
•Developing packages
•Classifieds strategy
Jim Chisholm Joint Principal, iMedia, France
Parallel Session 1
Workflow Management -Production, Editorial, Advertising
•Reducing the cost of operations
•Minimizing manpower
•Reducing time to press
•Facilitating the entire operation with integrated solutions
Moderator: *Manfred Werfel, Research Director and DeputyCEO, Ifra, Germany*
An interactive panel discussion with the publishing community comprising of publishers, industry vendors and end users will be held at the end of the session.
Multi-Media Sales Model
•How to create successful sales teams
•Print/online classified strategies
•How to reward staff
Robert C. Granfeldt, Vice President Consulting Morris DigitalWorks, USA
The Google Economy
•How publishers can partner with Google to generate new revenue streams
Speaker to be confirmed
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Online Classifieds- Speurders.nl
•Launching an online classifieds site in a highly competitive market
•Practical steps on how to develop a site
•Challenges for the future
Leon Kramer, Marketing Manager, Speurders.nl,The Netherlands
Panel Discussion:Competing for the Advertisers' Budget
•At a time when advertiser across the world are reviewing their marketing strategies, shifting revenues from traditional media and developing new strategies for attracting and retaining consumers, this session examines the views of key decision makers in marketing and outlines how you can increase your share of the advertisers' budget
Speakers to be confirmed
Lunch, Expo Visit
Session 4 Circulation, Readership and Audience
Sessions hosted by **Inma**
The Brand Positioning of The Times of India
•Applying brand management principles to aproduct portfolio
•Capitalizing on a growth market to win market share
Ravi Dhariwal, Executive Director, The Times ofIndia, India
Parallel Session 2
Waste Management
•Key performance indicators for newspapers
•What should be measured and what results can be achieved
Speaker to be confirmed
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Strategy Development of Korea SportsNewpapers - IS
•How IS (sister newspaper of JoongAng Ilbo) worked out operational and restructuring strategies
•Pursued differentiation strategies
Changhee Park, Director/Strategic PlanningOffice, JoongAng Ilbo, Seoul, South Korea
Eyeballs and Audiences: Ideas and TrendsWorldwide
•Tap into the unique "INMA Conversation"worldwide and learn about the best ideas to grow newspaper circulation, readership and audience
•Harvest the best examples of product, price and promotion in this global tour de force presentation
Earl J. Wilkinson, Executive Director, INMA, USA
Closing Summary of the Conference
Asia Media Awards Gala Dinner

Event Activities

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Back by popular requests; take fulladvantage of the **Publish Asia 2007 Golf Tournament** to network with industry leaders head at one of the finest golf courses in Manila on March 29, Thursday

A **Welcome Dinner reception** will be hosted by Manila Bulletin on the evening of Tuesday 27 March from 18 00hrs onwards. All delegates are invited for a guided plant tour at Manila Bulletin on the same evening.

On Wednesday, 28 March, The Philippine Department of Tourism and the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation hosts a Philippine Cocktails at the Puerta Real in the Old Walled City of Manila, featuring cultural and folk presentations.

The **6th Annual Asia Media Awards Gala Dinner** will also be on **Wednesday, 28 March** at the closing finale of the event. All the evening functions require RSVP. More information will be made available on www.publishasia.com

Please note: Ifra Asia reserves the right to alter the program as necessary. Information provided as accurate as possible at the time of printing. Please check www.publishasia.com for regular program updates.

FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2007
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
B1

IN THIS ISSUE
■ **SMIC investing** P6B in 1st phase of resort project /B2
■ **RP now Hitachi** global hub /B3

BUSINESS

Website: www.inquirer.net/business
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Current account surplus hits 7-yr high

Despite loan prepayments

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES POSTED A current account surplus of $5 billion in 2006, the biggest in seven years and more than double the $2 billion posted the year before, due to more robust remittances from overseas Filipino workers and a narrower trade deficit.

The large current account surplus contributed much to the record-high $3.8-billion balance-of-payments (BOP) surplus last year.

"The significant improvement over the $2.4 billion (BOP) surplus in 2005 reflected the consistently strong performance of the current account which more than offset the net outflow in the capital and financial account following the higher bond and loan repayments, including pretermination of public sector bonds and loans during the year," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

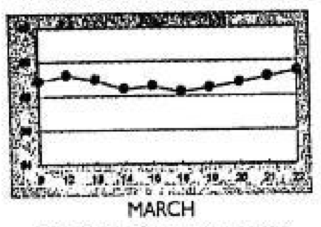
In a briefing, BSP director for research Iluminada Sicat said foreign loan prepayments during the year amounted to $2.5 billion—without which the BOP position would have ended up with an even larger surplus of $6.3 billion.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the local economy and the rest of the world. Any transaction which gives rise to a payment by a Philippine resident like im-

CURRENT/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



MARCH

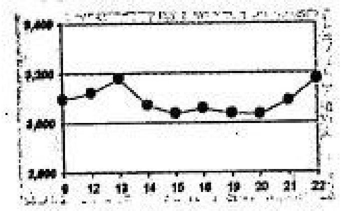
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱48.245 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 22, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B5)

Shares jump 2.84%

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 2.84-PERCENT higher yesterday, buoyed by a rally overnight on Wall Street after the US Federal Reserve left interest rates on hold, dealers said.

However, they said the buying momentum slowed as the main index approached another key resistance level at 3,200 points.

The composite index added 87.85 points to 3,178.32 after trading between 3,127.27 and 3,192.53. The broader all-share index rose 42.00 points to 2,039.53. Gainers overwhelmed losers 86 to 30 with 45 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 9.4 billion shares worth P5.4 billion.

As widely anticipated, the Federal Open Market Committee voted to keep the federal funds rate target at 5.25 percent while its

SHARES/ B5

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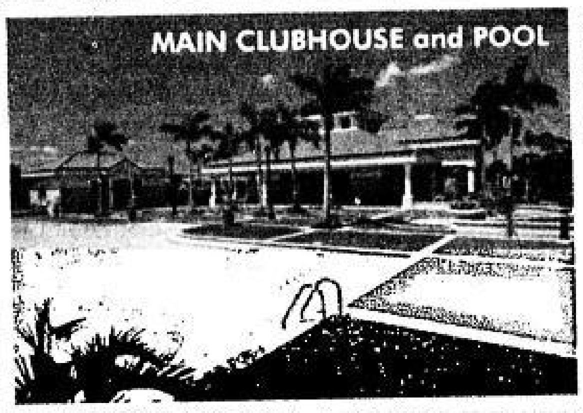

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SMIC investing P6B in 1st phase of resort project

Pico de Loro targets retirees, buyers of second homes

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

SM INVESTMENTS CORP. OF billionaire Henry Sy Sr. is spending P5-P6 billion over the next five years for the first phase of its 5,800-hectare Hamilo Coast resort community project in Nasugbu, Batangas.

During the project launch yesterday, SMIC executive vice president Josefino Lucas said the initial phase dubbed "Pico de Loro" would cover 40 hectares of the property. It features 11 condominium buildings consisting of 1,500 units.

Pico de Loro, the first of the 13 coves that will make up Hamilo Coast, aims to lure retirees and those buying second homes. A unit comes with a share of Pico de Loro Beach and Country Club. Prices, however, have yet to be revealed.

To make the beach community accessible to Manila residents, SMIC is planning to tie up with ship operators to ferry passengers from SM Bay City, the site of Mall of Asia, to Hamilo Coast. This will cut travel time, usually two and a half hours by car, by one hour.

The ferry terminal will be developed by SMIC. It is expected to be operational by 2008.

In the meantime, company officials yesterday said the titles covering Hamilo Coast were "clean."

This was in reaction to paid advertisements that came out in certain publications which showed claims over some of the property in the area.

The officials said those were nuisance claims that were filed a year ago and have already lapsed.

Also, Lucas said Pico de Loro was not part of those claims.

HENRY Sy Jr. and Tourism Secretary Ace Durano view an aerial photo of Hamilo Coast during its launch at the Manila Peninsula Hotel. Hamilo Coast fuses tourism with real estate and responsible urban planning, with global standards in design. RUDY ESPERAS

The water story

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

IN A MEETING LAST MARCH 20, ENVIRONment and Natural Resources Secretary Angelo Reyes gave his full support for the conduct of a national multi-sectoral water conference to address the global water crisis.

When we told him of the Alyansa Agrikultura finding that in the 2004 conference, the agricultural sector did not give a clear position, Secretary Reyes encouraged the farmers and fisherfolk to take an active role in the next meet.

Spotlight on water

Yesterday was World Water Day. Last night, former Senator and Natural Resources Secretary Heherson Alvarez devoted his entire talk show on the water issue. Three essential elements that have often been overlooked were identified to solve the water crisis: Use of low-cost technology with high return of investment (ROI), local government unit involvement, and coordinated national government support from 20 government agencies that often do not coordinate sufficiently on water projects. The successful case of the LGU of Bayawan City, Negros Oriental shows the interaction of these three elements.

Michael Mananquil, Bayawan City engineer, said the constructed wetlands project started when 704 families were relocated to a new area because of the construction of a coastal road in Poblacion Villareal. The city government, together with the multi-awarded Gawad Kalinga, started a social housing project for 704 fisherfolk families. But there was a problem. It was too expensive to build a waste water treatment facility using traditional technology.

In this instance, the National Water Resource Board and the National Economic Development Authority gave full coordinated support to the Bayawan LGU. It harnessed the DILG-GTZ Water and Sanitation Program to help implement the constructed wetlands technology.

This is a low-cost technology with a high return on investment (ROI). It uses natural processes for cleaning waste water.

Although this technology has been effectively applied in western countries for decades and implemented successfully in different parts of Southeast Asia, this is the first time it is tried in the Philippines.

While it costs P10,000 per person to provide wastewater treatment using traditional technology in Metro Manila, it costs less than P2,000 per person using constructed wetlands technology in Bayawan City, he said.

Wetlands are man-made engineered systems that remove organic pollutants and nutrients from waste water through filtering by soil or plants with the help of microorganisms. The cleaned waste water can then be reused for a variety of purposes, such as irrigation or toilet flushing. This will reduce the demand for fresh water, and therefore, the unproductive exploitation of water resources.

This also helps in sanitation and avoid contamination of water.

Construction wetlands is an environmentally friendly approach as it needs less energy and chemical, and uses mostly local materials. Operating and maintenance costs are low, and only low technical skills are required.

(For more information, call or text Mananquil at 09182039141 or the DILG-GTZ Water Program Office at (02) 9271875.)

Hot issue

The current issue debated today is the proposed executive order that may either strengthen or weaken our country's response to the national water crisis.

There is a need for more effective coordination among 20 government agencies involved in the water problem. In the Bayawan City case, the effectivity of the NWRCB in addressing the water issue was clearly demonstrated, but hampered by lack of funds and support.

The natural resources secretary, who chairs the NWRB, is correct in re-engineering the government structure to strengthen our response to the water crisis. One view proposed two years ago was to abolish the NWRB and give all the powers needed to address the water issue to one bureau. Some still believe in this solution. Others, however, take strong exception to this because of the urgent need to recognize and address the multi-varied aspects of the water crisis.

One fear is that the views of the agricultural sector, which uses 70 percent of our water, will not be adequately represented. One example is the use of low cost technologies such as treadle and drip irrigation which the National Irrigation Authority, in an interview last week, expressed great interest in. The other view which strengthens, rather than weakens or even abolishes the NWRB view, is our recommendation.

Giving more power to NWRB or even transforming it into a body with the powers of a commission is preferred. In addition, having a stronger support mechanism, such as a bureau dedicated to the water issue, will be welcomed, provided it will be guided by a multi-sectoral interagency group.

With the strengthened national response catalyzed by a stronger organizational structure, it is hoped that the sad story of water in the Philippines will become a successful and happy one.

(The author is Agriwatch chair. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112)

QUEZON I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Poctol, Pitogo, Quezon

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFICATION AND TO BID

QUEZELCO I is inviting interested suppliers to apply for qualification and to bid for the supply of electrical materials for the electrification projects of seventeen (17) sitios within the Province of Quezon funded under Department of Energy (DOE) ER No. 1-94.

Prospective bidders have to submit their updated company profile with latest Audited Financial Statements addressed to **Hermes Z. Avillo**, BAC Chiarman, QUEZELCO I, Brgy. Poctol, Pitogo, Quezon. Financial standing of the suppliers will be evaluated as to the capability to accomplish the said undertaking.

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders at the BAC Secretariat upon payment of non-refundable fee of **P2,500.00**.

The pre-qualification and bidding activities are as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Pre-qualification of suppliers/ Issuance of Bid-documents	March 26-April 02, 2007 10:00 AM
2. Pre-bid conference	April 2, 2007 - 1:00 PM
3. Opening and Evaluation of Bid	April 10, 2007 - 1:00 PM
4. Approval of Resolutions of Award/Notice of Award	
5. Issuance of Notice of Award	

Only qualified bidders who were present during the pre-bid conference will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

All bids must be accompanied by a bidders bond equivalent to 10% of the bid price in the form of Cash, Manager's Check or demand draft.

QUEZELCO I reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals or declare a failure of bidding anytime prior to award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders.

For more information, please contact BAC secretariat at Tel. No. (042) 318-8156.

(Sgd.) **HERMES Z. AVILLO**
BAC Chairman

Noted:
(Sgd.) **ENGR. AL MAHATANI V. LEBUMFACIL**
Executive Officer

(PDI - March 23 & 24, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project/ Location/ Brief Description	One (1) lot Supply of manpower, equipment, tools and supplies for the servicing and maintenance of landscaped areas in the BSP Main Complex
Approved Budget for the Contact	P3,480,000.00
Contract Duration	One (1) year contract

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar requirement awarded and completed within the last five (5) years (Y2002 to present) amounting to at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be bid. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening. Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	23 March - 12 April 2007 up to 2:00 PM only
2. Pre-bid Conference	13 April 2007, 10:30 AM
3. Opening of Bids	8 May 2007, 2:00 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	) These shall be in accordance) with the prescribed periods) allowed in the Implementing) Rules and Regulations (IRR)-A) of R.A. No. 9184 dated) 10 January 2003.
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,740.00 to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI - March 23, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Regional Office No. V
Pier Site, Legazpi City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority (NFA) in Region V, through its Regional Bids and Awards Committee (RBAC) invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the following projects:

	Project	Location	Brief Description	Approved Budget (Php)	Calendar days for Completion
Lot 1	Restoration of of dryer house at Libon, Albay	NFA compound, Libon, Albay	Reroofing/Repair/ improvement of the unit	10,669,163.16	180
Lot 2	Repair/Rehabilitation of GID II Whse.	NFA compound, Virac, Catanduanes	Restoration of damaged roofings, columns, roofs, doors etc.	5,572,369.56	120
Lot 3	Repair of warehouses of Sorsogon	NFA compound Cabid-an, Sorsogon	Re-roofing/Restoration/ Improvement	1,299,380.93	100
Lot 4	Repair/reroofing of Prov'l office and Repair of Whse/ installation of secondary doors/ elec'l. rewiring	NFA compound, Masbate City	Replacement of old roofing sheets/provision of screen doors & replacement of old elec'l. wirings	1,034,873.35	100

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB license with a minimum Small B category and duly registered with the Government Electronic Procurement System (GEPS) of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). The prospective bidder must submit a largest single contract, the value of which adjusted to current prices using the wholesale consumer price index, and completed within the period of five (5) years, similar to the contract to be bid and must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC). Also, the prospective bidder must have key personnel and equipment available for the implementation of the contract. The RBAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the eligibility check/screening as well as the preliminary examination of bids. The RBAC will conduct post-qualification of the Lowest Calculated Bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of RBAC activities are as follows:

	ACTIVITIES	DATE	TIME
1.	Receipt from prospective bidders of Letter of Intent (LOI) & including application for eligibilty & to bid	March 22-28, 2007	8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
2.	Issuance of eligibility forms	March 22-28, 2007	8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
3.	Deadline for submission of Eligibilty Requirements	March 29, 2007	8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
4.	Notice of results of Eligibility Check	March 30, 2007	8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
5.	Issuance of Bid Documents	April 02, 2007 to April 13, 2007	8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
6.	Pre-bid Conference	April 13, 2007	10:00 a.m.
7.	Submission of Bid Document	April 30, 2007	until 9:30 a.m.
8.	Opening of Bids	April 30, 2007	10:00 a.m.

Eligibility forms/requirements may be secured and submitted to the RBAC Secretariat upon submission of letter of intent (LOI) and payment of a non-transferable/non-refundable amount of Php 500.00 to the NFA Cashier.

Bidding documents will be issued to eligible bidders only upon payment of a non-transferable/non-refundable amount of Php 5,000.00 per lot to the NFA Cashier.

The venue for the pre-bidding conference, submission and opening of bids shall be at the conference room, 2nd floor, NFA-Regional Office V, Pier Site, Legazpi City.

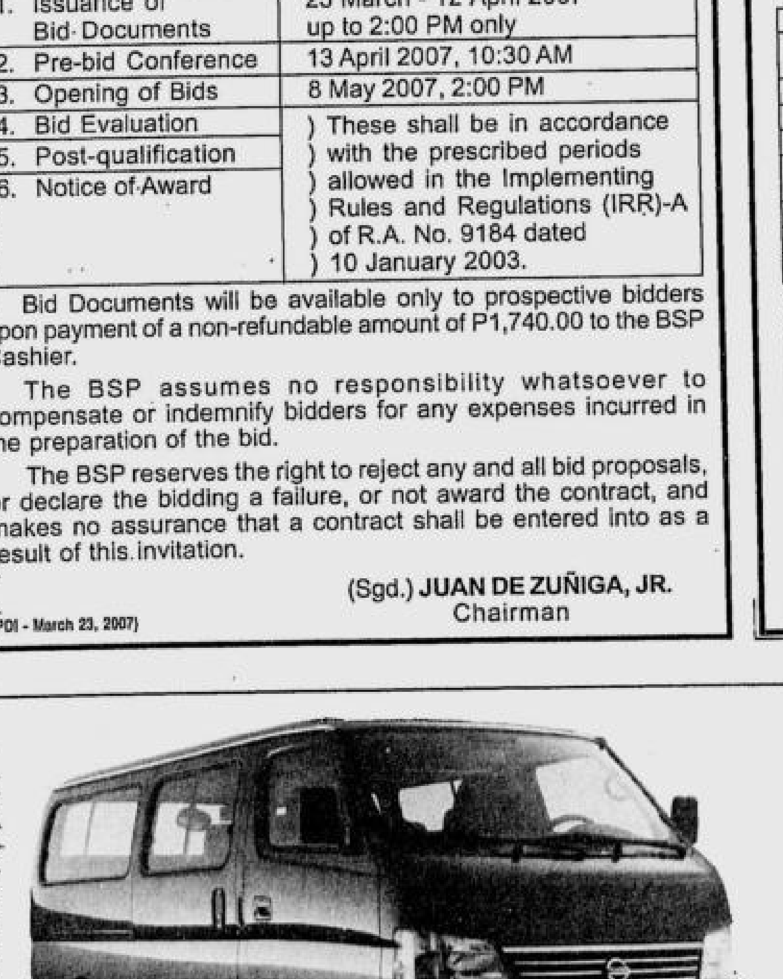
Any eligible bidder can bid for one, a combination or all of the lots.

Other inquiries may be addressed to the RBAC Secretariat with tel. # (052) 480-7933 / 480-7015 / 480-7085 / 820-0018 and Fax # (052) 480-7900.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THEREOF, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITIES OR DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS, OR TO AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NFA OR TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **JOSE B. GUEVARA**
RBAC Chairman

(PDI - March 23, 2007)



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		399,000	48,669	34,683	27,756	24,028

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NISSAN

RP now Hitachi global hub

Laguna facility to take over Mexico's role

By Ronnel W. Domingo

HITACHI GLOBAL STORAGE TECHnologies yesterday announced that its facility in Laguna would become its global hub for the manufacturing of a key component of hard disk drives following a decision to phase out a plant in Mexico.

In a statement sent out from Hitachi's office at the Laguna Technopark in Biñan, the company said the manufacturing of hard disk sliders would be transferred here from its plant in Guadalaja, Mexico, which would be shut down by mid-2008.

Sliders are aerodynamically shaped blocks that help keep in position a hard drive's recording head, which reads or writes data.

"[The] Laguna site is receiving a new mission as the global center of competency for slider manufacturing," the statement said.

"The new mission builds upon Laguna's existing slider manufacturing capacity, making it Hitachi's primary producer for this extremely critical piece of the hard disk drive (HDD) system," it added.

Hitachi said the Laguna plant, which currently accounts for about a fifth of Hitachi's slider output, last year reached a critical time-to-market milestone by improving manufacturing turnaround time threefold over a three-year period.

"Given this high level of specialization and technical expertise, the Laguna site is well suited to becoming a center of competency," the firm said.

To prepare for the changes, Hitachi's Laguna workers would undergo additional training for an estimated total of 94,000 man-hours, while the facility would triple its slider capacity to represent 85 percent of Hitachi's global slider needs.

Kanji Nakao, Hitachi GST's Philippines general manager, said consolidation of the group's global manufacturing and development would result in significant benefits to Hitachi, its Philippine operation and its ties to the local community.

"Sliders represent a very complex component of the hard drive and require a high level of expertise to manufacture," he said. "Our ability to transfer this mission to the Philippines is based in part on the availability of such a highly skilled local workforce."

In a separate statement sent out from San Jose, California—where Hitachi produces disks—the company said the movements were aimed at creating some $300 million in savings over the next five years by streamlining operations and maximizing efficiencies.

Ayala-led fund to raise $125M

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

ARCH CAPITAL MANAGEMENT CO. LTD., THE manager of an Asian property fund co-owned by the Ayala Group, is raising an additional $125 million by the second quarter from international investors.

The additional capital will increase Arch Capital's managed fund to $200 million, after ALI and its parent Ayala Corp. plunked in $75 million last year.

The $200 million capital will be used over a seven-year period to invest in bustling real estate markets and distressed property sectors around Asia.

Ayala Land Inc. president Jaime Ayala said that this year, Arch Capital plans to launch a retail project in Beijing, a mixed-use residential project in Macau, and two housing projects in Bangkok.

Arch Capital earlier said it had found a Macau partner and a group of Hong Kong developers for a large-scale residential community project similar to ALI's 12-hectare residential condominium community "Serendra" at the Bonifacio Global City.

Macau's property boom is being fueled by the phenomenal growth in Asia's gaming industry.

In Thailand, Arch Capital has also teamed up with the Narai Property Group, a partner of Ayala subsidiary Ayala International, for two residential projects.

Sources said separately that Arch Capital was about to conclude a roadshow to lure potential fund investors from the United States, Middle East, Japan, Europe and Asia.

ALI invested in the property fund to take advantage of opportunities arising from regional market conditions.

ALI had said that the distress from the 1997 Asian crisis felt acutely by banks and property companies has finally been overcome.

Current . . .

From page B1

portation or debt servicing is a deficit item in the BOP while any which gives rise to a receipt like borrowing, exporting or inward remittance is a surplus item.

The current account of the BOP is the sum of the balance of trade (exports less imports of goods and services), net factor income (such as remittances, interest and dividends) and net transfer payments (such as foreign aid).

A current account surplus increases a country's net foreign assets by the corresponding amount, and a current account deficit does the reverse.

The Philippines' current account surplus for 2006 was equivalent to 4.3 percent of its gross domestic product.

In particular, the 17 percent rise in remittances of overseas Filipino workers together with higher net receipts from other transfers such as gifts and donations brought the full-year current transfers to $13.2 billion, representing a year-on-year growth of 15.8 percent.

Meanwhile, the trade-in-goods deficit shrank to $7 billion from $7.8 billion in 2005 as exports grew at a faster 14.6-percent rate compared with imports' 10.6-percent expansion.

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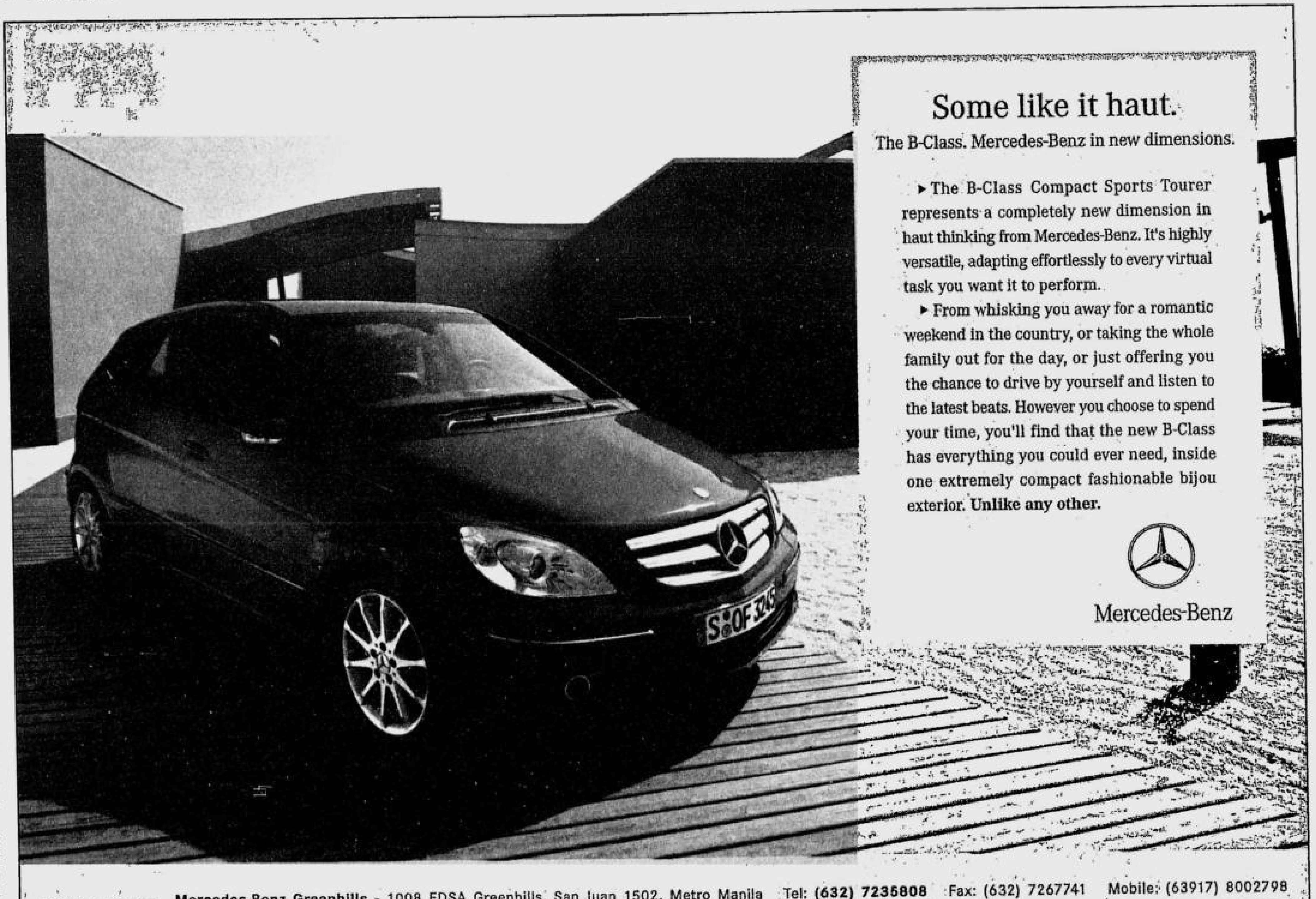

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Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

IN RE: GRANT OF MERIT AWARDS AND INCENTIVES IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 14, 2007 ELECTIONS.
x----------------------------x

Abalos, Benjamin S. — *Chairman*
Borra, Resurreccion Z. — *Commissioner*
Tuason, Florentino, Jr. A. — *Commissioner*
Brawner, Romeo A. — *Commissioner*
Sarmiento, Rene V. — *Commissioner*
Ferrer, Nicodemo T. — *Commissioner*

Promulgated: **21 March 2007**

RESOLUTION NO. 7841

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 292 and Republic Acts No. 6713 and Minute Resolution 06-0788 authorize the grant merit awards and incentives to deserving officers and employees of the Commission and of its deputized agencies; and

WHEREAS, pursuant thereto, it is the policy of the Commission to extend recognition to the outstanding and exemplary discharge of duty of its personnel and deputies in connection with the May 14, 2007 elections;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commission on Elections has *RESOLVED*, as it hereby RESOLVES, to provide rules for the grant of merit awards and incentives to deserving members of boards of election inspectors, and boards of canvassers, Commission and deputized agency personnel in connection with the May 14, 2007 elections.

SECTION 1. Awards: to whom granted. - The Commission shall give merit awards to boards of election inspectors (BEI), provincial board of canvassers (PBC), city board of canvassers (CBC)/district board of canvassers (DBC), municipal board of canvassers (MBC), Commission and deputized agency personnel, except officers of PNP with the rank of Deputy Regional Directors and above, officers of the AFP with the rank of regional commanders or their equivalents, and above. Officials of the Commission with the rank of Director III and above are likewise excluded as recipients of the award system, unless designated as Chairman or member of a board of canvasser, who have demonstrated exemplary service and performance in connection with the May 14, 2007 elections.

For this purpose, there is hereby established an incentivce and merit award system to be aministered by a Committee on Awards as herein provided.

SEC. 2. Merit Awards. - Merit awards shall be in the form of either citation, or cash, or both, at the discretion of the Commission. Awards for national winners shall be as follows:

A. GROUP AWARDS:

1. Three (3) best BEIs

   "Parangal sa Tinig ng Bayan" plaque and the following cash award:

   1st - P45,000.00
   2nd - P30,000.00
   3rd - P15,000.00

2. Three (3) best MBC, CBC, DBC and PBC

   "Parangal sa Malayang Halalan" plaque and the following cash award for each board:

   1st - P60,000.00
   2nd - P45,000.00
   3rd - P30,000.00

B. INDIVIDUAL AWARDS:

P25,000.00

SEC. 3. Incentives and other benefits. - The Commission may also grant incentives and other benefits such as bonus, hazard pay and promotion in the case of other Commission personnel.

SEC. 4. Criteria. - For the purpose of granting merit awards, the following criteria shall be considered:

1. For BEIs:
   - a) faithful and prompt compliance of election activities;
   - b) mastery of duties and functions;
   - c) independence and non-partisanship;
   - d) resistance to factors adverse to the conduct of clean, free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections;
   - e) display of extraordinary courage;
   - f) efficient and accurate appreciation, tabulation and counting of votes;
   - g) difficulty of place of assignment; and
   - h) prompt and accurate submission of reports.
2. For BOCs:
   - a) mastery of canvassing rules and procedures;
   - b) accurate, efficient, and speedy canvassing of ERs/COCs;
   - c) orderliness in the conduct of canvassing;
   - d) display of extraordinary courage in resisting bribes, threats and pressures;
   - e) resourcefulness; and
   - f) prompt and accurate submission of reports.
3. For individuals:
   - a) exemplary and outstanding performance;
   - b) non-partisanship;
   - c) resistance to temptation of bribery and ability to overcome the risks inherent to the conduct of clean, free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections; and
   - d) display of extraordinary courage in resisting bribes, threats and pressures;
   - e) extent or impact of contribution made in the conduct of elections; and
   - f) demonstrated camaraderie with deputies, political personalities and electorate.

SEC. 5. Committee on awards. - There shall be a National Committee on Awards, and for each city/municipality/district, province and region, a local Committee on Awards constituted as follows:

- a) Municipal/City Awards Committee
  1. Election Officer, Chairman, to be designated by the PES or in the case of NCR, by the RED.
  2. Local Civil Registrar or Zone Supervisor, Member, in consultation with the Provincial Statistical Officer.
  3. Chairman of the accredited Citizens Arm, Member. In the event of several accredited Citizens Arm, upon collective nomination.
- b) Provincial Committee on Awards
  1. PES, Chairman, to be designated by the RED.
  2. DECS Superintendent, Member.
  3. Provincials Chair of the accredited citizen arm, Member.

  In case any of the above-named officers is not available, the Commission shall designate a substitute.
- c) Regional Committee on Awards including the NCR
  1. RED, Chairman, to be designated by the Chairman of the Commission.
  2. Director IV, Civil Service Commission, Member.
  3. Regional Director, DepEd, Member.
- d) National Committee on Awards
  1. Executive Director, Chairman.
  2. Deputy Executive Director for Administration, Member.
  3. Deputy Executive Director for Operations, Member.
  4. Director IV, Personnel Department, Member.
  5. Representative of the accredited Citizens Arm, Member.

SEC. 6. Functions of the committees. - Each local award committee shall evaluate and screen nominations to the end that only deserving nominees shall be given the awards.

- a) The City/Municipality, District Committees on Awards shall monitor the performance of the BEIs and select one winner.
- b) The Provincial Committee on Awards shall:
  1) monitor the performance of the CBCs/MBCs;
  2) select one winner for the CBC/MBC;
  3) evaluate the winning BEIs from the city/municipal and district levels; and
  4) select one winner for the BETs.
- c) The Regional Committee on Awards shall monitor the performance of the PBCs, DBCs and CBCs of cities comprising one or more legislative districts respectively.

SEC. 7. Nomination by persons or groups. - Any person or organization, including wathcers, candidates, representatives of the citizens arms or political parties, who/which has personal knowledge of any extraordinary act or exemplary service of a board of election inspectors or board of canvassers or Commission officials and employees and deputies in connection with the elections may nominate such board or individuals. Nominations shall be made in the prescribed form with supporting pertinent documents which shall be submitted to the proper committee not later than June 15, 2007.

SEC. 8. Disqualification of Nominees / Cancellation of Nomination. - The following shall disqualify a nominee or cancel a nomination:

- a) Presence of a case in connection with the performance of official duty of the board, i.e., a case has been filed for correction of manifest errors, other pre-proclamation controversy or annulment of proclamation or election results, unless otherwise dismissed by the Commission for lack of merit or due to circumstances beyond the control of the board.
- b) Presence of a case filed against a COMELEC or deputized agency personnel in connection with the performance of his official duty for the 2007 elections, unless otherwise dismissed by the Commission for lack of merit.
- c) Failure to submit nomination requirements on time.
- d) Misrepresentation of material information made in the nomination form and pertinent documents submitted to the committees.

SEC. 9. Where to file nomination. - Nominations for group awards shall be submitted to the proper City/Municipal, Provincial, and Regional Awards Committee. Nomination for individual awards shall be submitted to the National committee.

SEC. 10. Procedure in the selection of awardees.

1. **FOR GROUP AWARDS (BEIs and BOCs)**
   - A) City/Municipal Awards Committee:
     1. Accept nominations for deserving BEIs;
     2. Monitor and evaluate performance of the nominees;
     3. Adjudge one (1) most-outstanding BEIs as winner; and
     4. Submit the names of the winning BEIs to the Provincial Awards Committee.
   - B) Provincial Awards Committee:
     1. Accept nominations for deserving CBCs/MBCs in the province and the winning BEIs from the City/Municipal, District Awards Committee;
     2. Monitor and evaluate performance of the nominated CBCs/MBCs in the province and adjudge one (1) most outstanding CBC/MBC canvassers as winner;
     3. Evaluate the winning BEIs submitted by the City/Municipal, District Awards Committees and adjudge one (1) most outstanding BEI as winner; and
     4. Submit the winners in both categories (BEIs, CBC/MBC) to the National Awards Committee.
   - C) Regional Awards Committee (for PBCs and BOCs of cities comprising one or more legislative districts):
     1. Evaluate nominations for outstanding PBC and DBC/BOC of cities comprising one (1) or more legislative districts;
     2. Adjudge one (1) most outstanding PBC and DBC/BOC of cities comprising one (1) or more legislative district; and
     3. Submit the winners to the National Awards Committee.

   The above committees shall submit to the National Awards Committee their respective selections for review and approval not later than June 20, 2007.
2. **FOR INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**
   - a) Any personnel of the Commission and employees of the deputized agencies may submit a nominee for individual award.
   - b) Most Outstanding EO and Most Outstanding Employee of the Deputized Agencies - to be screened or evaluated by the Provincial Awards Committee (PAC). The PAC shall select one outstanding EO in the province and thereafter submit the name of the winning EO to the Regional Awards Committee (RAC). From among the winning EOs submitted by the PAC, the RAC shall adjudge one most outstanding EO of the region to be submitted in the National Awards Committee. Each region shall be represented by one most outstanding EO.

     However, in the National Capital Region, the screening and evaluation shall be conducted by the RAC, then by the National Awards Committee.
   - c) Most Outstanding PES and Most Outstanding Field Employee other than EO or PES - nominations shall be screened and evaluated by the RAC. The latter shall select one most outstanding PES of the region to be submitted to the National Awards Committee. Each region shall be represented by one most outstanding PES and one most outstanding field employee other than EO or PES.
   - d) Most Outstanding Main Office Employee - nominations shall be screened or evaluted by the National Awards Committee.

SEC. 11. Evaluation and screening. - The Committee on National Awards created under this resolution shall process, evaluate and screen all group awardees of the local committees and all nominations for individual awards. It shall submit its recommendations to the Commission *en-banc*, for confirmation, not later than June 30, 2007.

SEC. 12. Title of awards. - The awards shall be titled as follows:

I. **Group Award**
   1. Three (3) most outstanding BEIs
   2. Three (3) most outstanding CBCs/MBCs
   3. Three (3) most outstanding PBCs/BOCs

II. **Individual Award**

Most outstanding individual awards shall be as follows:

1. Most outstanding Provincial Election Supervisor;
2. Most outstanding Election Officer;
3. Most outstanding field employees other than the Provincial Election Supervisors and the Election Officers;
4. Most outstanding employee in the main office; and
5. Most outstanding employee of the deputized agencies.

SEC. 13. Awards ceremonies. - The awarding ceremonies shall be held in Manila for national awards and in the respective cities/municipalities/provincial/regional capitals for local awards on a date to be set by the Commission

SEC. 14. Funds. - Merit awards and incentives benefits and other related expenses shall be charged against the appropriations for the May 14, 2007 elections.

SEC. 15. Effectivity. - This resolution shall take effect on the seventh day after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation.

SEC. 16. Dissemination. - The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this resolution and give its widest dissemination.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

ROMEO A. BRAWNER
Commissioner

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

(PDI - March 23, 2007)

Megaworld project seen getting P60B in investments

Firm's biggest township project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CONDOMINIUM AND OFFICE SPACE DEveloper Megaworld Corp. yesterday said its 50-hectare McKinley Hill project in Fort Bonifacio was seen to generate up to P60 billion in investments over the next five to seven years.

In a statement, Megaworld chair and chief executive Andrew Tan said business locators, schools and various embassies were seen to pump in P10 billion in commercial investments, P20 billion in residential projects and P30 billion in office spaces.

Tan said McKinley Hill was the company's biggest township project to date and that it would have a dozen project components, such as single detached homes in McKinley Hill Village, townhouses, a mid-rise condominium called McKinley Hill Garden Villas, offices for business process outsourcing services, high-rise luxury residences, embassies, schools, a mall, sports amenities, an events venue and a hotel.

Megaworld itself is investing until 2014 some P12 billion for the construction of BPO offices, P3 billion for the development of the retail and mall component and P18 billion for the residential component of McKinley Hill.

Tan said McKinley Hill was "the most integrated new township development in the Philippines," following Megaworld's successful satellite city, referring to Eastwood in Quezon City.

He said the different components of the McKinley project were in various stages of development, with at least 80 percent of the residential lots in the Mediterranean-style McKinley Hill Village having been sold and were ready for house construction.

Tower 1 of the Stamford Executive Residences, which will cater to BPO employees, has started construction as well.

The first BPO building in the area, the 30-000-square-meter IT ecozone called One World Square, is expected to be finished in May while a second BPO tower—Two World Square—just broke ground.

A new site for the British Embassy also broke ground, while the Korean Embassy also plans to relocate there.

McKinley Hill has also attracted the Chinese International School, Korean International School and Enderun Colleges, a hotel management institution affiliated with Les Roches of Switzerland.

Further Megaworld is launching in April Tuscany, a cluster of mid- to high-rise residential condominiums.

"The McKinley Hill project offers a Live-Work-Play-Learn credo that made Eastwood City a prime location," Tan said.

"As a company that's bullish on the overall prospects of the real estate industry, we are committed to make McKinley Hill the most modern, beautiful and vibrant new township in the country today," he said.

Intel, DepEd ink deal on program for public schools

By Riza T. Olchondra

INTEL MICROELECTRONICS PHILIPPINES and the Department of Education (DepEd) yesterday signed an agreement to jointly undertake a program that will put up computer laboratories in selected public schools.

Dubbed the ICT for Education initiative, the program has already generated some P4.4 billion worth of funding pledges from the private sector, Education Secretary Jesli Lapuz said.

Under the agreement, Intel will provide the equipment and technology for the laboratories while DepEd, with the help of private sector donors, will take care of other resources such as training materials. The training will be jointly conducted by Intel and DepEd.

The computer laboratories will be used for the training of teachers and students in participating public schools.

Lapuz said the project would be implemented at the start of school year 2007-2008.

The ICT for Education initiative forms part of the five-year World Ahead Program, which aims to extend Internet and computer access to the world's next billion users while training 10 million teachers in integrating technology in education.

"We are pleased to be working with Intel on this initiative, particularly since it is an important step toward the DepEd's long-term goal of realizing the 1:1 e-Learning model—where each teacher and student will have a computer," Lapuz said.

"This will be a pilot project. We will be putting in content based on our local curriculum (and) we will measure the improvement in education against others that did not deploy," he said.

Officials also said the ongoing Foundation for IT Education and Development, which is under the Intel Teach program, as well as the multisectoral Gearing-up Internet Literacy and Access for Students, will still be implemented.

Intel will identify and provide technology that will enhance education through ICT, said an official of Intel Southeast Asia.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 22, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10.5	11	10.5	10.75	48,200
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	57	58.5	57	58	537,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	64.5	65	64.5	65	3,566,800
China Banking Corp.	860	870	860	870	5,730
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.55	0.56	0.54	0.55	27,130,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	92	103	92	103	163,540
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	59.5	62	59.5	62	3,996,700
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50	50	50	50	800
Philippine National Bank	48	48	47.5	47.5	16,100
Phil. Savings Bank	58	62	58	62	2,000
Security Bank Corp.	76.5	77	74.5	77	289,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.65	0.68	0.65	0.68	40,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	534,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	6	6	6	6	1,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	37.5	38	37.5	38	1,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1670	1650	1660	2,660
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	675	675	650	660	2,310
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2150	2170	2150	2170	890
Ivantage Corp.	1.56	1.62	1.56	1.58	3,515,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	6.1	6.3	6.1	6.2	31,645,000
First Gen Corp.	54.5	56	54.5	55	415,700
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	70	72	70	71.5	318,700
Manila Electric Co. A	70	71	70	71	171,400
Manila Electric Co. B	70	72	70	71.5	2,763,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.1	9.3	9.1	9.3	4,156,000
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.55	4.45	4.5	15,114,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.3	0.31	0.29	0.29	3,240,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.4	1.48	1.4	1.46	984,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	85,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	25	25	15,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	53	56.5	51.5	51.5	1,191,900
RFM Corp.	1.28	1.3	1.28	1.28	702,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	14,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	1,270,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64	63.5	64	57,700
San Miguel Corp. B	72	74.5	72	74.5	166,500
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.36	2.36	2.28	2.3	2,813,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.5	2,475,900
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.7	1.72	1.68	1.68	10,270,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.75	4.9	4.75	4.85	1,452,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	1,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.7	345,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	1,040,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.9	5	4.9	5	693,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	50,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	150,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0.37	0.33	0.35	58,400,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.016	0.016	0.014	0.014	1,061,900,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.017	0.017	0.015	0.015	148,000,000
Ayala Corp.	560	560	540	540	603,990
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.87	1	0.87	0.98	20,490,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.3	8.4	8.2	8.3	2,891,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.9	7.2	6.9	7.1	2,977,000
AJO.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0775	0.0775	0.0725	0.0725	36,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.35	3.35	591,000
APC Group Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.39	0.4	17,120,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	286,500,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.58	1.62	1.56	1.62	13,889,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.6	3,000
PAL Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	140,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4.5	4.55	4.45	4.45	194,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.45	3.55	3.45	3.45	25,209,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	546,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.1	5.1	5	5	299,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.65	2.75	142,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	13	13	13	13	856,500
Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	126,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	9.3	9.3	8.9	9.1	588,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.4	2.42	2.28	2.3	5,033,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.36	0.28	0.32	88,290,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.71	0.72	0.71	0.72	860,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.35	0.37	0.32	0.32	276,550,000
SM Investments Corp.	350	367.5	350	367.5	420,040
South China Resources Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	507,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	5,000
Vivant Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.2	0.2	10,250,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.75	15.75	15.5	15.75	25,425,600
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	50,000
Belle Corp.	1.5	1.52	1.42	1.44	12,877,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	1,410,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.85	3.75	3.8	37,000
C&P Homes Inc.	2.7	2.75	2.6	2.6	320,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.43	0.31	0.38	81,080,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.76	0.79	0.75	0.77	41,800,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.88	1.9	1.86	1.86	923,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.115	0.125	0.0975	0.105	74,550,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.66	1.7	1.66	1.68	58,616,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.29	1,370,000
Gotesco Land, Inc.B	0.32	0.32	0.29	0.29	610,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	63,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	3,500,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.49	0.5	0.48	0.48	1,370,000
City & Land Developers	3	3	3	3	16,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.84	0.84	0.82	0.84	3,980,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.2	191,153,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	130,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.91	0.93	0.87	0.87	23,110,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	55,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	18.5	19	18.5	18.75	3,702,100
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.61	3,080,000
SM Development Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.75	3.75	1,188,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.75	11.25	11.5	5,841,400
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.71	0.75	0.69	0.69	710,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.23	0.245	51,190,000
Zipporah Rlty Hldgs Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.75	24.75	24.75	24.75	23,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.72	1.76	1.72	1.74	9,953,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1300	1325	1295	1295	200,920
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.9	7	6.9	7	2,821,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2430	2535	2430	2525	367,750
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.26	61,760,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	30,000
Imperial Res.	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	50,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.32	2.32	2.32	2.32	100,000
IPVG Corp.	6.5	6.6	6.3	6.3	1,057,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.06	0.06	9,800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	200,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	41,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.1	176,000
Philweb Corp.	0.047	0.048	0.047	0.047	120,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.25	4.25	414,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	130,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	28.5	28.5	26.5	27	3,441,300
Keppel Phils. Marine, Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	534,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	2,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.9	4.05	3.8	3.8	5,516,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	15,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.37	2,500,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	1.04	1.04	1	1.04	4,027,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.35	531,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.65	2.65	470,000
Paxys Inc.	26.5	27	26.5	26.5	99,800
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.2	5.2	5	5	758,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.2	5.2	5	5	494,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	1,671,600,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	10.25	11.25	10.25	11.25	12,164,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.25	11.5	11	11	47,000
Geograce Res. Phil., Inc.	1.64	1.68	1.6	1.68	58,554,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,390,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	8,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.029	471,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	248,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.021	2,918,600,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.4	4.45	4.35	4.4	13,998,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	21.25	21.75	21.25	21.75	278,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.74	0.74	0.72	0.73	1,050,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.2	1.26	1.2	1.24	4,391,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.53	0.57	0.52	0.53	30,740,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	6,500,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	62,000,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	817,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	45,000

CURRENCIES

March 22, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.747328	1.000000	48.4420
Japan	Yen	0.006353	0.008501	0.4118
United Kingdom	Pound	1.470593	1.967800	95.3242
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.095679	0.128028	6.2019
Switzerland	Franc	0.617678	0.826515	40.0380
Canada	Dollar	0.646590	0.865202	41.9121
Singapore	Dollar	0.491340	0.657462	31.8488
Australia	Dollar	0.598773	0.801218	38.8126
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.982409	2.652661	128.5002
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.199288	0.266667	12.9179
Brunei	Dollar	0.489730	0.655308	31.7444
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023354	0.031250	1.5138
UAE	Dirham	0.203537	0.272353	13.1933
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.338100	64.8202
Korea	Won	0.000797	0.001066	0.0516
China	Yuan**	0.096629	0.129299	6.2635
Argentina	Peso	0.241268	0.322841	15.6391
Brazil	Real	0.361028	0.483092	23.4019
Denmark	Kroner	0.134238	0.179624	8.7013
India	Rupee	0.017260	0.023095	1.1188
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215183	0.287936	13.9482
Mexico	New Peso	0.067881	0.090831	4.4000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.526659	0.704722	34.1381
Norway	Kroner	0.122194	0.163508	7.9207
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012342	0.016515	0.8000
South Africa	Rand	0.101800	0.136218	6.5987
Sweden	Kroner	0.107585	0.143959	6.9737
Syria	Pound	0.014397	0.019264	0.9332
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022573	0.030205	1.4632
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000348	0.000466	0.0226

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 21, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 21, 2007

Shares ...

From page B1

comments were taken to increase the chances of a rate cut later this year, sparking sharp gains on Wall Street.

"The bullish sentiment on Wall Street spilled over onto the local market," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

"With a gain of over 100 points in the past two days, we don't rule out a correction by (Friday) but investors will likely take their cue from Wall Street's performance (overnight)," Macapagal added.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone jumped P135 to P2,525.

SM Investments rose P15 to P367.50.

San Miguel A-shares rose 50 centavos to P64 while its B-shares gained P2 to P74.50. *AFP*

PRULINK	PRU LIFE U.K.	
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week Mar. 20, 2007	Last Week Mar. 13, 2007
Bond Fund - Peso	1.60032	1.61766
Managed Fund - Peso	1.82874	1.86757
Growth Fund - Peso	1.67789	1.73363
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.3743	1.3740

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission

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Financial Center, Roxas Blvd.,
Pasay City, 1308

INVITATION TO BID

The Government Service Insurance System ("GSIS"), as it continues to serve its mandate, wishes to invite prospective investors to participate in the sale of its shares in GSIS Family Bank (the "Bank").

Accordingly, all interested bidders ("Investors") are invited to submit bids for the following: Twenty Million One Hundred Fifty Thousand Six (20,150,006) issued common shares and Five Million Forty Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Eight (5,048,758) issued preferred shares representing 99.55% of the total issued and outstanding shares of the Bank.

Interested Investors may secure the Request for Bids starting 27 March 2007 at the GSIS Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat, Level 7 GSIS Building, Financial Center, Pasay City during office hours upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 25,000.

A Pre-Bidding Conference will be held on 3 April 2007 at 9:00 am in the GSIS Conference Hall, Level 3, Core G, GSIS Building, Financial Center, Pasay City.

The GSIS hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to annul the bidding process anytime prior to the award of the contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Investor/s or any obligation to inform the affected Investor/s of the grounds for the GSIS' action.

For further inquiries, interested Investors may contact:

Atty. Nora M. Saludares
Head, BAC Secretariat
BAC Secretariat Office
Level 7, GSIS Building, Financial Center, Pasay City
Telephone No. 832-18-94 / 891-61-61 loc. 4944

Approved by:

(Original Signed)
OMELITA J. TIANGCO
Executive Vice President &
Chairperson, GSIS Investment Bids & Awards Committee

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3rd Corporate Invitational Badminton Cup

April 21, 2007
at Badminton Central Makati, Inc. (BMCI), Pasong Tamo, Makati City

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Unilever
INQUIRER SPORTS
Metrobank Card Corporation
A joint venture of Metrobank and ANZ
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Finlandia Suites

Accenture
ADB
BSP
CaiSta Phils.
Chase Technologies
CITIGROUP
Export Industry Bank
HP Phils
Pilipinas Shell
PLDT
Thomson Phils

Team Competitions:
Two Men's Doubles
Two Ladies Doubles
Mixed Doubles

Organized by Rizal Badminton Club
contact persons are
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Liza Alamar 0917-8015310
Melvin Nubla 0920-9220063
and J.R. Chua 0920-5552507

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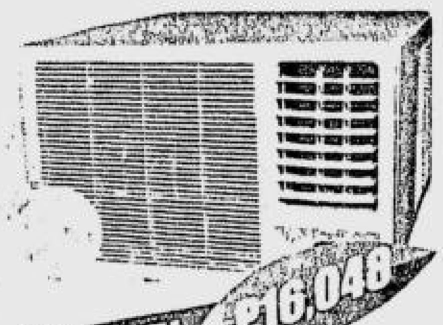
*PARTICIPATING MODELS ON CASH PURCHASES!

0% applicable provided monthly bill is paid in full. Subject to bank terms and conditions. Price, promo, visual and specification may change without prior notice.



FREE! P16,048

CARRIER
WCARF 010EC
1 HP WITH TIMER
FREE STAND FAN

FREE! P14,498

CARRIER FP-
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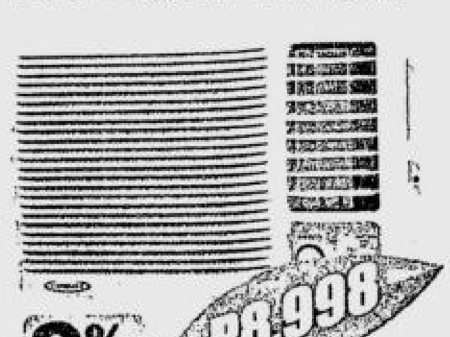
.75 HP WITH TIMER
FREE STAND FAN

FREE! P13,298

CONDURA FP-
WCOND008EC
.75 HP WITH TIMER
FREE STAND FAN

P12,798

0% INTEREST 6 MONTHS
P2,133/ MO.
CONDURA
WCOND008EA
.75 HP MANUAL

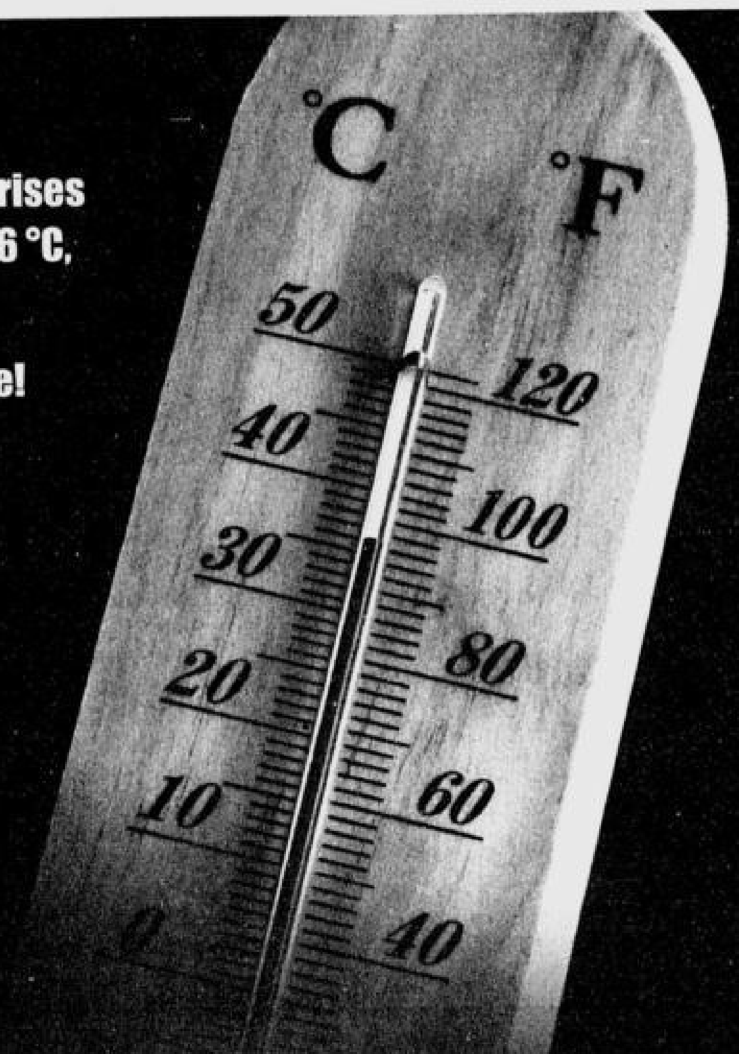


P8,998

0% INTEREST 6 MONTHS
P1,499.66/ MO.
CONDURA FP-
WCOND006EA
.5HP MANUAL

P8,498

0% INTEREST 6 MONTHS
P1,416.6/ MO.
KELVINATOR
WKELH006EA
.5HP MANUAL



When the temperature rises
to a scorching 36 °C,

Tempers flare!

Viruses attack!

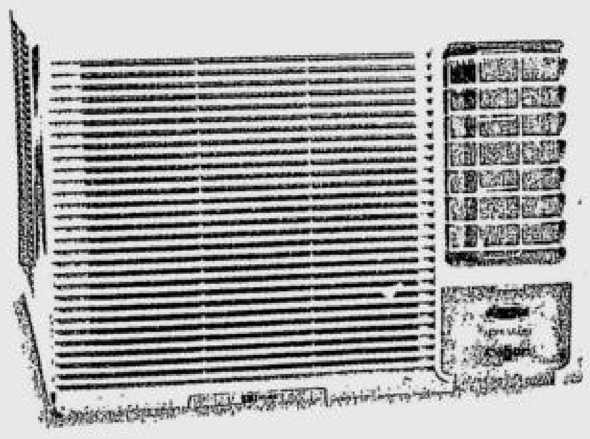
Bodies dehydrate!

Pollutants fill the air!

UNFORTUNATELY,

your 10-year old aircon may no longer be capable of cooling you, let alone protecting your family from all the ill effects of summer.

FORTUNATELY, today's Carrier can.



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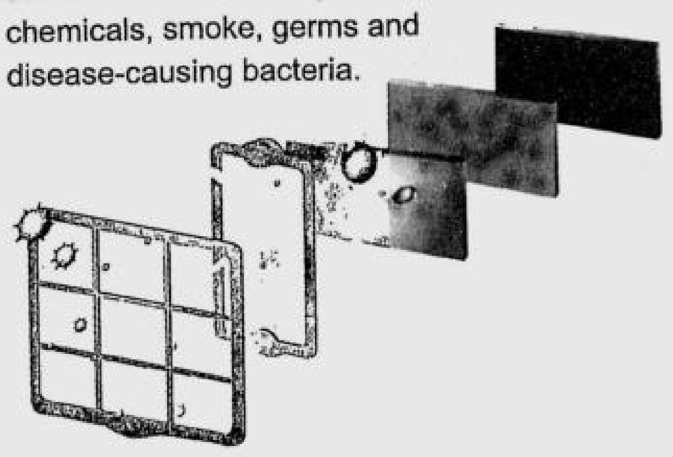

COMFORT YOU CAN AFFORD.

Today's Carrier is designed with lower wattage and a high **Energy Efficiency Ratio** which consumes less electricity than your 10-year old aircon.

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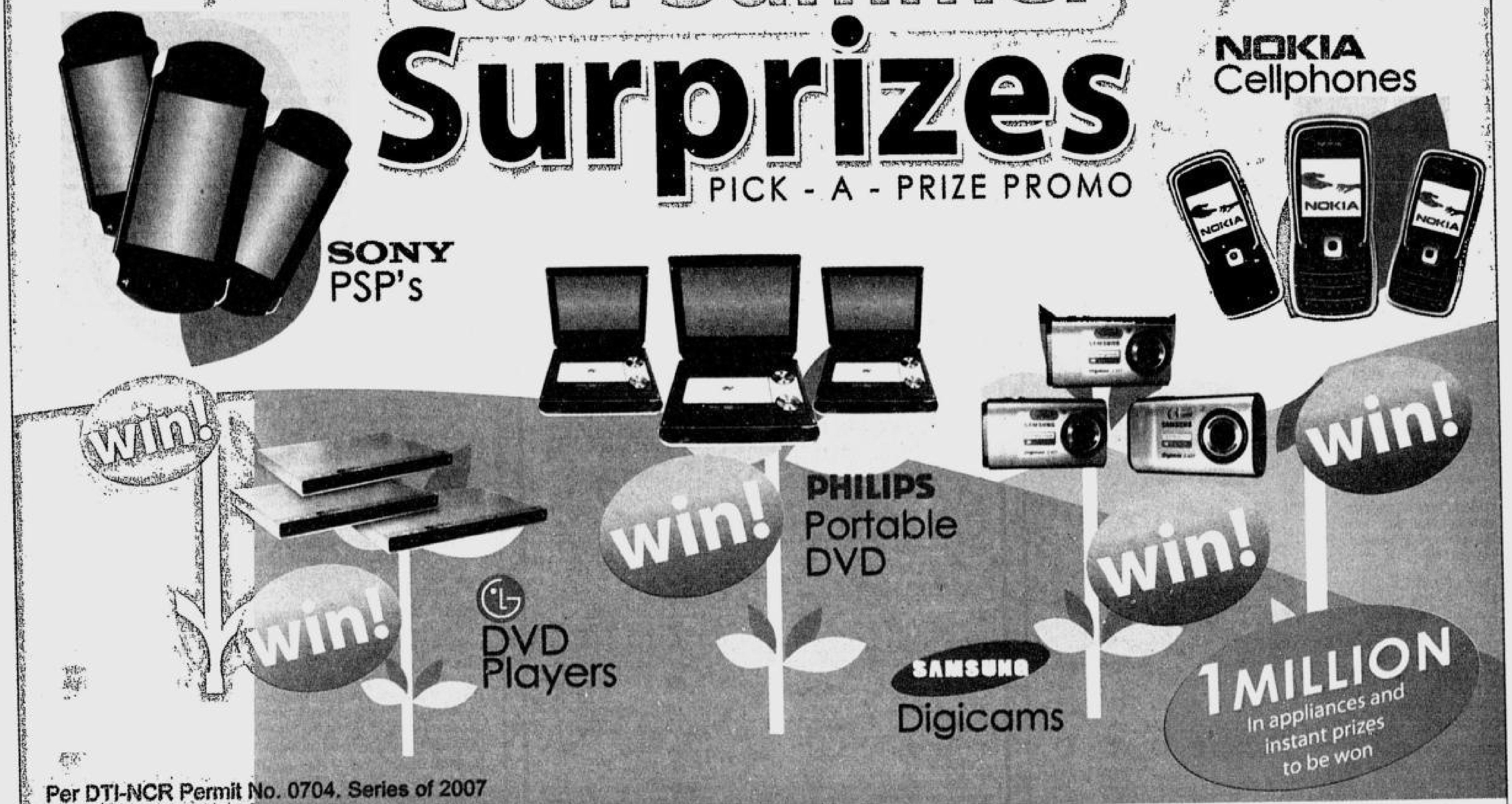

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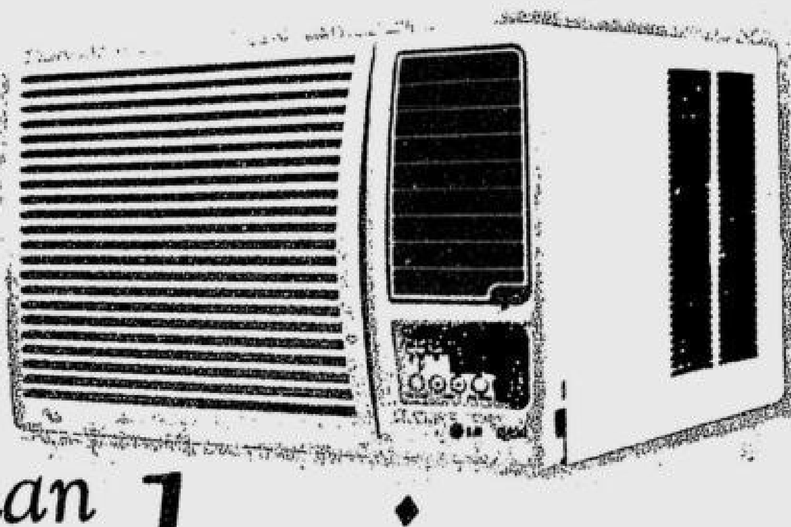
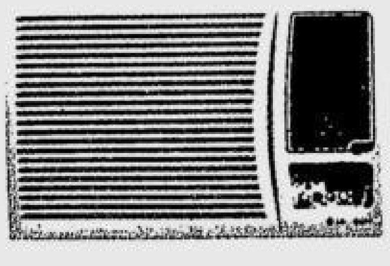
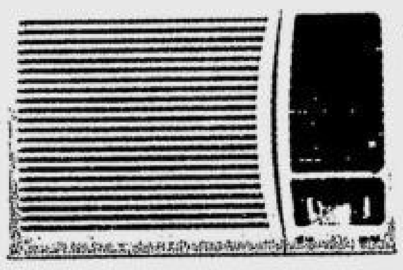
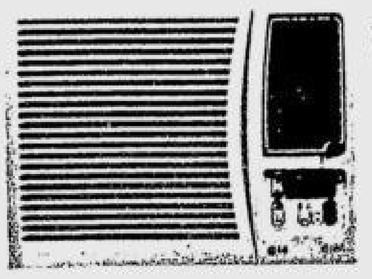




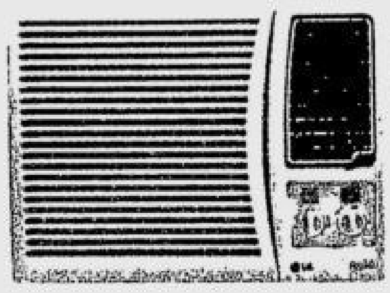
P16,798
LA 150RG
Cooling Capacity: 13,250 kj/hr
10.6 EER Remote Control
with soft touch panel
4-way Aircon deflection
Auto- swing
12-hour on/off timer
slide in/out chassis
Gold Fin



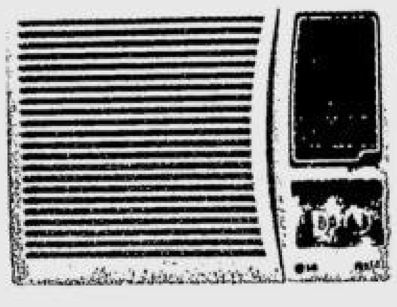
P15,798
LA 150MG
Cooling Capacity: 13,250 kj/hr
11.1 EER
Manual Control
4-way Aircon deflection
Auto- swing
12-hour on/off timer
slide in/out chassis
Gold Fin



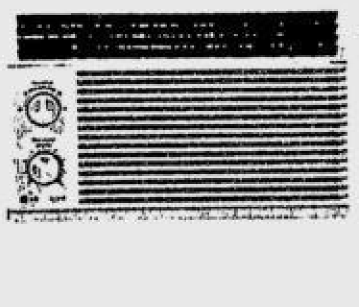
P14,448
LA 100RG
Cooling Capacity: 9,600 kj/hr
10.3 EER
Remote Control with soft touch panel
4-way air deflection
Auto- swing
12-hour on/off timer
slide in/out chassis
Gold Fin



P13,398
LA 100MG
Cooling Capacity: 9,600 kj/ hr
10.3 EER
Manual Control
4-way Aircon deflection
Auto- swing
6- hour off timer
slide in/out chassis
Gold Fin



P12,398
LA 080MG
Cooling Capacity: 7,5000 kj/hr
11.0 EER
Manual Control
4-way air deflection
Auto- swing
6- hour off timer
slide in/out chassis
Gold Fin



P8,7[redacted]
LA 060MG
Cooling Capacity: 6,000 kj/hr
10.8 EER
Manual Control
2-way air deflection
Gold Fin

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Imus (046)471-8023/6030
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Kalookan 363-5338/5524/5246/5345
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Lotus 670-01451
Lucena (042)373-0443/46*
Malabon 287-0478/285-9729/287-0344
Makati 812-2882/1352/1353*
Metropoint 833-7665 7829 8196*
Metropolis 809-6174/6321*
Missouri 722-1264/4188/1020
Pasig 656-6643 to 47*
Pearl Plaza 851-6401 to 03*
Plaridel (044)795-3271/74/76*
Quezon City 724-2570/2501/2591
Riverbanks 941-5003/5191/5180*
Rosario (046)515-5749*
Rustans 911 2311 127576
San Joaquin Pasig 641-4452/642-1867*
San Pablo (049)562-8242/43*
Shangri-La 638-6017/
Showroom 631-5188*
SM City 920-9151 to 53/927-9518/929561*
St.Francis 633-1302 to 04*
Sta Rosa (049)5491243/5497925
Tarlac (045)985-1245/1253
Tayuman 252-5787/59
The Fort 856-6620/6491 to 92*
Valenzuela 277-9536 38/39*
LCC MALL Legaspi (052) 480-7949
Pacific Mall, Legaspi (052) 480-6266*
Naga (054) 473-6003*
R-AB Angeles (045) 625-8456
Q.I. 784-1313 / 1234
Puregold Commonwealth 932-2932 / 3506

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
AL ABBAR ALUMINUM PHILIPPINES, INC. Rm. 908-909, Hanston Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Walter Stopfer	Design Manager
CCT CONSTRUCTORS CORPORATION 3/F Princess Bldg. 104 Esteban St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Akihiro Yoshida	Project Manager
IBM BUSINESS SERVICES, INC 17th & 18th Flrs., Cyber One Bldg., # 11 Eastwood Ave., Bagumbayan, Quezon City	Jung Wee Kim	HR Accounting Service Owner
COLUMBUS MINERALS, INC. 3/F 111 Paseo de Roxas Bldg. cor. Legaspi Village, Makati City	Craig Robert Canny Foggo	Business Analyst
JALAN ENTERPRISES D7 Juan Luna St., Binondo, Manila	Yongda Li	Consultant
DYD REFRIGERATION SYSTEMS, INC. Unit F 3/F, City Center Bldg., Ortigas Ave., San Juan, Metro Manila	Myung Ok Yoon	Consultant
UNI-DRAGON MINING & DEV., CORP. 87 Sct. Gandia, Sacred Heart, Tomas Morato, Quezon City	Changping Zhang	Operator Manager
YTN REALTY DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT, INC. 133 Aguirre Ave., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Kyeonghye Lee (w/o Kim)	General Manager
LINK2SUPPORT INC. 5/F Techno Plaza One Bldg., Orchard Rd., Eastwood City Cyberpark, Libis, Quezon City	Hyun Hee Hwang	Korean-Product Support Specialist
HSBC ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING (PHILIPPINES) INC. 5150 North Bridgeway, Northgate Cyberzone, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	David James Swales	Vice President SME
HSBC ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING (PHILIPPINES) INC. 5150 North Bridgeway, Northgate Cyberzone, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Diane Goodchild	Assistant Vice President-Operations
TOPGAMES, INC. Unit-C, 8/F Marvin Plaza Bldg., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Siu Wai Yuen	IT Technician
TOPGAMES, INC. Unit-C, 8/F Marvin Plaza Bldg., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Wai Hung Ryan Chow	Assistant Operations Manager
BEIJING TONG REN TANG PHIL. CORP. 88 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Shijun Zhang	Medical Consultant
BEIJING TONG REN TANG PHIL. CORP. 88 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Hongwei Lin	Medical Consultant
BEIJING TONG REN TANG PHIL. CORP. 88 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Hao Wang	Medical Consultant
KM C&S PHILIPPINES INC. 6/F Polaris Ctr., #48 Polaris Bldg., Bel-Air, Makati City	Taehyeon Park	Supervisor
KM C&S PHILIPPINES INC. 6/F Polaris Ctr., #48 Polaris Bldg., Bel-Air, Makati City	Jang Keun Lee	Supervisor
COCA-COLA BOTTLERS PHILIPPINES, INC. 4/F King's Court 2 Bldg., 2129 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	David Francis Lyons	Chief Executive Officer
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Sridhar Srinivasan	Functional Analyst
SOLTEC INC. Whse. 10 Sunblest Compound, Km. 23 West Service Rd., Cupang, Muntinlupa City	Kwangyoung Lee	Technical Consultant for Wooden Mould Maintenance
S.B.B.N. TRADING CORP. 196 Dr. Sixto Antonio Ave., Caniogan, Pasig City	Gurmail Singh Talwar	General Manager
XP MEDIA ASIA PACIFIC LIMITED CORPORATION U-2404-D East Tower, PSE Ctr. Bldg., Exchange Rd., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Cheol Young Suk	Operation Manager
MANABAT DELGADO AMPER & CO. 5/F Salamin Bldg., Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Vernon Carl Baldwin	Consultant

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI - March 23, 2007)

MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER

Contract Reference Number
Name of the Contract
Location of the Contract

Standard Form Number: SF-INFR-05
Revised On: July 29, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER**, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	:	A.)	**Construction of Conference Room and Four (4) Offices at the Canopy of the Main Building.**
		B)	**Procurement of Various Medical Equipment**
Location	:		**MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER**
Bried Description	:	A)	**Construction of Conference Room and Four (4) Offices at the Canopy at the main Building would include General requirements and Architectural works. Which include mansonry works, structural steel columns, roof trusses, roofing, wall (exterior, interior, steel columns), finishing/tiling works, parapet board, ceiling board (exterior, a. interior, b. interior), doors and windows, cabinets, paintings, plumbing works, electrical works demolition works and other miscellaneous works.**
		B)	**Purchase of Medical Equipment which include delivery and installation of various Medical Equipment.**
Approved Budget for the Contract(ABC)	:	A)	**Php 3,033,950.53 - INFRA (DBP-Medicare Trust Fund)**
		B)	**Php 9,613,262.58 - GOODS (DBP-Medicare Trust Fund)** **Php 2,084,093.41 GOODS (MMMH Income)**
Contract Duration	:		**90 days - INFRA**
Contract Duration	:		**90 days - GOODS**

Prospective Bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

A. Civil Works

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Reciept from prospective bidders of Letter of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	April 2-11, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	April 12-17, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	April 18-24, 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	April 30, 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 2 - 14, 2007
6. Pre-bid Conference	May 11, 2007 - 2:00 P.M.
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	May 25, 2007

B. Procurement of Goods

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 30, 2007 - April 19, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	April 11, 2007 - 2:00 P.M.
3. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility *(If single-stage bidding is used, delete this activity)*	March 30, 2007 - April 19, 2007
4. Opening of Bids	April 23, 2007 - 2:00 P.M.
5. Bid Evaluation	April 24, 2007 - May 8, 2007
6. Post-qualification	May 10, 2007
7. Notice of Award	May 25, 2007

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at **Brgy. # 6 San Julian, Batac, Ilocos Norte**, upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 2,000.00** to the **Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center - Cashier**. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 5,000.00 - INFRA : PHP 3,000.00 - GOODS** to the **Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center - Cashier.**

The **Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center** assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) LOUIE A. GUERRERO, M.D., FPCR
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Mar. 18 & 23, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT ORDER NO. 2007-06
11 December 2006

SUBJECT : GUIDELINES TO BE OBSERVED IN THE INSPECTION AND REGISTRATION OF AUTO LPG MOTOR VEHICLES

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 4 (d), paragraph 1 and Section 16 of R.A. 4136, Section 1 of B.P. Blg. 74, in compliance with the Philippine Clean Air Act and in line with the Standard Code of Practice for the use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in internal combustion engine of the Bureau of Products Standards (BPS) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the following rules and regulations are hereby promulgated in the inspection and registration of all auto-LPG motor vehicles.

Section 1. ***Safety Standards*** – The device for the use of LPG as fuel by any motor vehicle shall be installed only by a conversion/installing shop duly certified by the Bureau of Product and Standards (BPS) of the DTI under its Philippine Standards Certification Mark (PS Mark) scheme. The shop shall install the device in accordance with the specifications provided for under the Standard Code of Practice for the use of LPG (PNS 05), making sure that the fill valve is located outside the vehicle compartment and isolated from the Auto-LPG container. An appropriate sticker marked "LPG" shall be posted on the fill valve cover. For each device installed, the shop concerned shall officially affix the PS MARK.

Section 2. ***Guaranty.*** – Any LPG fuel device with the PS MARK installed in a motor vehicle shall be guaranteed by the shop by issuing a Certificate of Conversion/Installation against faulty defects which may cause accidents. Any accident that may rise as a result of the said defects shall be the accountability of the conversion/installing shop.

Section 3. ***Inspection and Maintenance.*** – The converted vehicle shall be subjected to an annual maintenance and inspection by the PS certified conversion/installing shop. The PS certified conversion/installing shop shall issue a corresponding Certificate of Inspection and Maintenance Compliance.

Section 4. ***Registration Requirements*** – An Auto-LPG motor vehicle when presented for registration shall, in addition to other Land Transportation Office (LTO) requirements, present the following documents:

1. PS Licensure Certificate issued by the DTI-BPS;
2. Certificate of Installation/Conversion by the PS certified conversion/installing shop (for the first year only); and
3. Current Certificate of Inspection and Maintenance Compliance by the PS certified conversion/installing shops.

Section 5. ***Duties of LTO Inspectors***
The LTO motor vehicle inspector shall verify the PS Mark, the PS License Certificate issued by the DTI-BPS to the conversion/installing shop concerned, the Certificate of Conversion/Installation and the current Certificate of Inspection and Maintenance Compliance by the PS certified conversion/installing shop. Under no circumstances shall an auto-LPG motor vehicle without the aforementioned documents be accepted for registration. To this effect, the DTI-BPS shall provide the LTO with the list of PS certified auto-LPG conversion/installing shops.

Section 6. ***Applicable Registration Fees.*** – The registration fees on an auto-LPG motor vehicle shall be pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 8794 also known as the "Motor Vehicle User Charge (MVUC) Law."

Section 7. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All rules and regulations inconsistent herewith are hereby deemed amended, modified and repealed.

Section 8. ***Preparation of Implementing Rules and Regulations*** – The relevant agencies under the DOTC shall prepare their respective IRR to put in effect this Department Order.

Section 9. ***Effectivity.*** – **These regulations shall take effect fifteen days after publication.**

(Sgd.) LEANDRO R. MENDOZA
Secretary

(PDI – March 23, 2007)

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Location: Bulacan, Philippines

Viewing: Strictly by Appointment
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For further information please contact Mike Ramos at
Tel: 852 2910/11 loc 109 Email mike.ramos@henrybutcher.com

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Fax No.: +63 2 831-9507
E-mail: manila@henrybutcher.com

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Philippine Sugar Centre Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (02) 454-0254 Website – www.nfa.gov.ph

March 21, 2007

TO : **ALL CONCERNED POULTRY RAISERS, HOG RAISERS AND FEED MILLERS**

SUBJECT : **EXTENSION ON THE SUBMISSION OF LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) FOR YELLOW CORN ALLOCATION**

The NFA wishes to announce the extension on the submission of LOI for Yellow Corn allocation from March 23, 2007 to March 29, 2007 to provide ample time in securing required 2007 BAI certification.

For further details relative to the Importation and Disposition of Yellow Corngrains you may call Marketing Operations Department at Tel. Nos. 426-05-69; 454-12-14; 453-39-00 local 4223; 982-38-00 local 4223.

(Sgd.) CONRADO DL IBAÑEZ
Assistant Administrator for Stabilization/
Concurrent Director, DMO

(PDI – March 23, 2007)

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OBITUARIES

"Whoever serves Me must follow me;
and where I am, My servant also will be." John 12:26

Our Dearly Beloved

DEXTER G. SANTILLAN

Peacefully joined our Lord on March 21, 2007
at the age of 54.

His loving wife **Teodora**; children **Michelle Ann** and **Raphael James**, all relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel J, North Wing Bldg., La Funeraria Paz, Inc., Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on March 27, 2007 at Paz Crematory after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

More CLASSIFIED ADS on pages...

NFA, BSP, Quezon Electric B2
COMELEC B4

Death Notice

CESAR HERMOSURA ANGELES

Peacefully joined his Creator
on March 20, 2007 at the age of 71.

His body lies in state at the family residence in Molave St., El Rey Subdivision, Duhat, Santa Cruz, Laguna and will be brought to the Iglesia Filipina Independiente Church on Saturday, March 24, 2007 at 6:00 am.

Interment will be at the Himlayan ng mga Anghel, Sta. Cruz, Laguna on March 24, 2007 after the 1:00 pm Mass.

VIRGILIO R. GARCIA

Joined his Creator on March 15, 2007 at the age of 66.

His body lies in state at their residence, 1050 F. Yuseco St., Tondo, Manila.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 24, 2007 at 9:00 am at the Manila North Cemetery.

TEOFISTO MANSUETO

Joined his creator last March 18, 2007 at the age of 81..

His body lies in state at the chapel of Brgy. 604 Zone 60 Bagumbayan St. Sta.Mesa Manila.

His body will be cremated tomorrow, March 23, 2007 at the St. Peter Main Chapel 296 Quezon Ave. Roxas District Quezon City at 9:00 am.

BUSINESS Friday
E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/business
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

QTV shifts focus to upscale women

Earlier strategy of targeting mass market led to huge losses

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

AFTER DRAGGING DOWN GMA NETwork Inc.'s net income by about half a billion pesos, QTV-11, the sister station of GMA-7, is now going through a transformation.

GMA president Felipe Gozon says QTV-11 will now tailor its local and acquired shows to suit the taste of the "more upscale female viewers" after its earlier strategy of targeting the low-income female market did not work out as well as expected.

"We will change the format and niche with the upper [income] women," says Gozon, during a lunch with INQUIRER business editors.

Gozon says GMA is expected to post a net income of P1.95 billion for 2006. It would have been P2.5 billion if not for the losses incurred by QTV due to production costs and insufficient advertising revenues.

QTV's decision to target women was based on the network's studies on the demographics of local TV viewers, which showed that women usually decide what to buy in the household.

This is supported by a study made by Leo Burnett Asia Pacific two years ago, which said that women were the largest and most influential consumer group, controlling over 80 percent of the household buying decisions.

Armed with this knowledge, GMA Network Inc. decided to tap the women sector as its main target.

The decision was also boosted by the fact that the biggest TV advertisers were consumer goods makers, in particular soap and shampoo firms Unilever and Procter & Gamble.

GMA NETWORK president Felipe Gozon

Their goods are mainly purchased by women.

It was a good move — QTV became the number three (albeit a far third) most watched station, after Channel 7 and Channel 2.

But while QTV got the audience, the advertising revenues did not follow.

"QTV can't compete with Channel 7 and Channel 2. We can't target the same market -- the broad masa market. Even with a high rating, there is not enough [advertising] money left after [channels] 2 and 7." says Gozon.

Gozon says although many companies in the Philippines posted substantial sales growth in 2006, they held back on advertising spending because of the perceived political instability in the country.

With half a billion pesos in losses to show for its strategy, management went back to the drawing board, decided to refocus and tap another segment of the women market—the more affluent viewers.

Gozon says the network's marketing guys proposed to target the more upscale women because of the successes of some lifestyle channels on cable TV that target this segment.

He says the patronage of certain cable channels showed that there is a market, and QTV can serve its needs.

"But we have to manage this [shift] so the ratings will not fall." he says.

QTV—or Quality TV—used to be Channel 11, owned by Eddie Villanueva, the charismatic leader who ran and lost during the last presidential election.

GMA Network acquired the rights to run the programs of Channel 11, which it renamed QTV in 2005.

Gozon says the news and most of the shows on QTV are now in English, not Filipino when it launched the station two years ago.

Meanwhile, GMA head of finance Jimmy Duavit says the highlight of the network's operations last year was the setting up of transmitters in major provinces like Cagayan de Oro and General Santos City.

Last January, GMA also built transmitters in the north—Sto. Tomas, La Union, Benguet Province, Pangasinan, Tarlac and Nueva Ecija.

More transmitters means clearer signals for TV viewers.

Quick facts about the female market

ASIA ACCOUNTS FOR NEARLY HALF of the world's female market with around 1.5 billion women—500 million of these are in China and another 500 million in India.

Forty-five percent of women in developed Asia and 41 percent in developing Asia are employed. (Ropers Worldwide)

Forty percent of all travelers in the Asia-Pacific region are women. (MasterCard study)

Sixty-one percent of women in the Philippines find most advertisements aimed at women patronizing in the way they talk to them.

Thirty-eight percent of women in the Philippines find women portrayals in media and advertising degrading.

Sixty-nine percent of the women believed that women played a role in the family's investments and banking options while 37 percent said that banking ads don't address the female influence.

Fifty-four percent of women in the Philippines admitted to having made an expensive impulse purchase within the last three months.

Insurance summit on March 28

THE FOURTH PHILIPPINE NON-Life Insurance Summit will be held on Wednesday, March 28, 2007, at the Makati Shangri-La. The annual event of the nonlife insurance sector is organized by Insurance Philippines with the Insurance Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association Inc. The theme is "Managing Risk Challenges in a Rapidly Changeable Insurance Market." Insurance Commissioner Evangeline C. Escobillo will deliver the keynote address.

The speakers and their topics are: Michael Huberti, GM, Munich Re on Underwriting of Natural Catastrophe Risks; John Rutherford, VP, Global Services Asia, on Risk Management of Industrial/High Valued Risks.

Clarence Yeung, Swiss Re on Insurance Solutions for Emerging Markets; Simon Wilson, managing director, Lloyd's of London (Asia) Pte Ltd, on Reinsurance Trends and Update in Asia; Rodolfo A. Lat, president, Chartered Adjusters Inc. on Trends in Claims Management/Adjustment; David Piesse, head of insurance, Sun Microsystems on Sharing Fortunes by Insurance Industry and IT Partnerships.

New lingerie line offers business opportunity

PHILIPPINE WACOAL CORP'S NEW BRASsiere line, Luludi Lingerie, is tapping the direct selling route to sell its products. It will be the only line to be carried in the direct selling venture of Philippine Wacoal, which has its flagship brand, Wacoal.

Wacoal was introduced in 1989 and was initially sold in stores, and by dealers or direct selling agents. With the introduction of Luludi Lingerie, Wacoal will now be sold only in stores and Luludi via dealers.

"Wacoal and Luludi are intended for the same age bracket, though differentiated in terms of their choices and priorities. With the launching of Luludi, we are hoping to cater to a broader market which we were not able to tap with our flagship brand," said Toshihisa Tanaka, PWC's president and CEO.

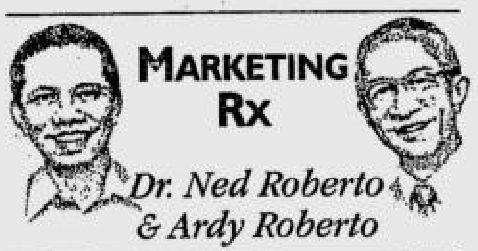
TANAKA

Luludi Lingerie are of simpler styles but are functional.

For women who assume more responsibilities, buying a piece of lingerie is already considered a luxury. But we believe that regardless of role or position in the society, all women have the right to a piece of nice lingerie to feel good about themselves. With Luludi, we are indulging women to lingerie sans the guilt," shared Tanaka.

The Philippine Wacoal Corp. is targeting to increase its dealership this year with Luludi Lingerie. New styles will be available this April at dealers nearest you.

'What is guerrilla marketing?'



MANY OF THE QUESTIONS THAT WE'VE been getting have been from entrepreneurs and marketers. They work in both small and large companies with marketing budgets that have been cut or are too tiny to begin with as compared to the Unilevers and Procter & Gambles.

Their question, which seems like more of a plea to be freed from the chains of high cost advertising and marketing mediums, is in unison: "How do we go about marketing our products and services on this shoe-string budget that I have?"

Two words almost always get mentioned when communicate to these marketers and *negosyantes*: guerrilla marketing.

Entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs and marketers with limited resources love to use the 100+ guerrilla marketing weapons that Jay Conrad Levinson describes in his book, "Guerrilla Marketing," which was first published way back in 1983. (Almost the same time that the Sr MRx-er first published his "Applied Marketing Research" book.) Levinson has since then created his guerrilla marketing concept into the largest selling marketing book series of all time. At last count more than 14 million copies have been sold.

As a treat to our readers, starting this week, we'll be hosting Jay Conrad Levinson as our guest columnist. We'll be featuring his columns every other week until August 2007.

Q: I'm new in marketing and there are so many definitions of what marketing is. How would you define marketing in the first place?

Jay Levinson: Marketing is absolutely every bit of contact any part of your business has with any segment of the public. Guerrillas view marketing as a circle that begins with your ideas for generating revenue and continues on with the goal of amassing a large number of repeat and referral customers.

The three keys words in that paragraph are every, repeat and referral. If your marketing is not a circle, it's a straight line that leads directly into Chapters 11 or 13 in the bankruptcy courts.

Q: How is guerrilla marketing different from traditional marketing?

Levinson: Guerrilla marketing means marketing that is unconventional, nontraditional, not by-the-book and extremely flexible. Several factors make it different from old-fashioned, traditional marketing:

1. Guerrilla marketing attacks do not suffer from your lack of resources, but instead prosper because lack of capital makes them more willing to try new and innovative ideas.

2. Instead of concentrating on traffic, responses or gross sales, profits are the only yardstick by which you measure your marketing.

3. Instead of ignoring customers once they've purchased, you have a fervent devotion to customer follow-up.

4. Guerrilla marketing preaches the gospel of cooperation, urging you to help others and let them help you.

5. Instead of believing that single marketing weapons (such as advertising) work, guerrilla marketers know that only marketing combinations work. (Therefore, guerrilla marketing provides you with 100 different marketing weapons; advertising is only one of them.)

A concept for you to embrace is that a guerrilla marketing attack is never-ending. It has a beginning, a middle but never an end, for it is a process. You improve it, perfect it, change it, even pause in it. But you never stop it completely.

Q: What steps are needed to launch a successful guerrilla marketing attack?

Levinson: Of all the steps in succeeding with a guerrilla marketing attack, three of them take the most time.

Maintaining, monitoring and improving your attack. You spend a relatively brief time developing the attack and inaugurating it, but you spend the life of your business maintaining, monitoring and improving your attack. At no point should you ever take anything for granted. At no point should you fall into the pit of self-satisfaction because your attack is working. Never forget that others, very smart and motivated competitors, are studying you and doing their utmost to surpass you in the marketing arena.

Guerrillas thrive and prosper because they understand the deeper meanings of the phrases "customer base" and "long term commitment." They know that "relationship marketing" is more than a buzz phrase.

No matter how successful your attack, never lose contact with your customers. If you do, you lose your competitive advantage over huge companies that have too many layers of bureaucracy for personal contact. Guerrilla marketing is always authentic marketing and never acts or feels to be impersonal, by-the-number marketing. It never feels like selling.

Q: I once read that we aren't supposed to "sell" but "create solutions" for customers. That sounds fancy, if not complicated. Isn't marketing and selling the same? What does this really mean?

Levinson: Marketing Management author (and co-au thor of the senior MRxer), Philip Kotler, says:

"Authentic marketing is not the art of selling what you make but knowing what to make. It is the art of identifying and understanding customer needs and creating solutions that deliver satisfaction to the customers, profits to the producers and benefits for the stakeholders.

Market innovation is gained by creating customer satisfaction through product innovation, product quality and customer service. If these are absent, no amount of advertising, sales promotion or salesmanship can compensate."

Q: "Attack" is such a violent term to use on marketing to customers. What's the character of this guerrilla marketing attack? How does this apply to customer service and CRM (customer relationship management)?

Levinson: Your attack must be characterized by a very strong tie with your own target audience. You know them. You serve them. They know it.

Your marketing attack, and I use the word "attack" to plant the idea of aggressiveness into your brain, will succeed in direct relationship to how narrow-minded you can be. Guerrillas have the insight that precision strengthens an attack.

They know the enormous difference between their prospects and their prime prospects. They are aware of the gigantic chasm separating their customers from their best customers. This perspective enables them to narrow their aim only to the best prospects that marketing money can buy and the finest customers ever to grace their customer list.

CRM: Don't treat customers equally

Once they have a customer, they do all they can to intensify the relationship, and they do not treat all customers and prospects equally. Consider the menswear chain with a database of 47,000 names. Mailings are never more than 3,000 at a time.

Who receives the mail? Says the owner, "Only the people appropriate to mail to." When he received trousers of a specific style, he mailed only to those customers to whom he was certain they'd appeal—and enjoyed a 30 percent response rate.

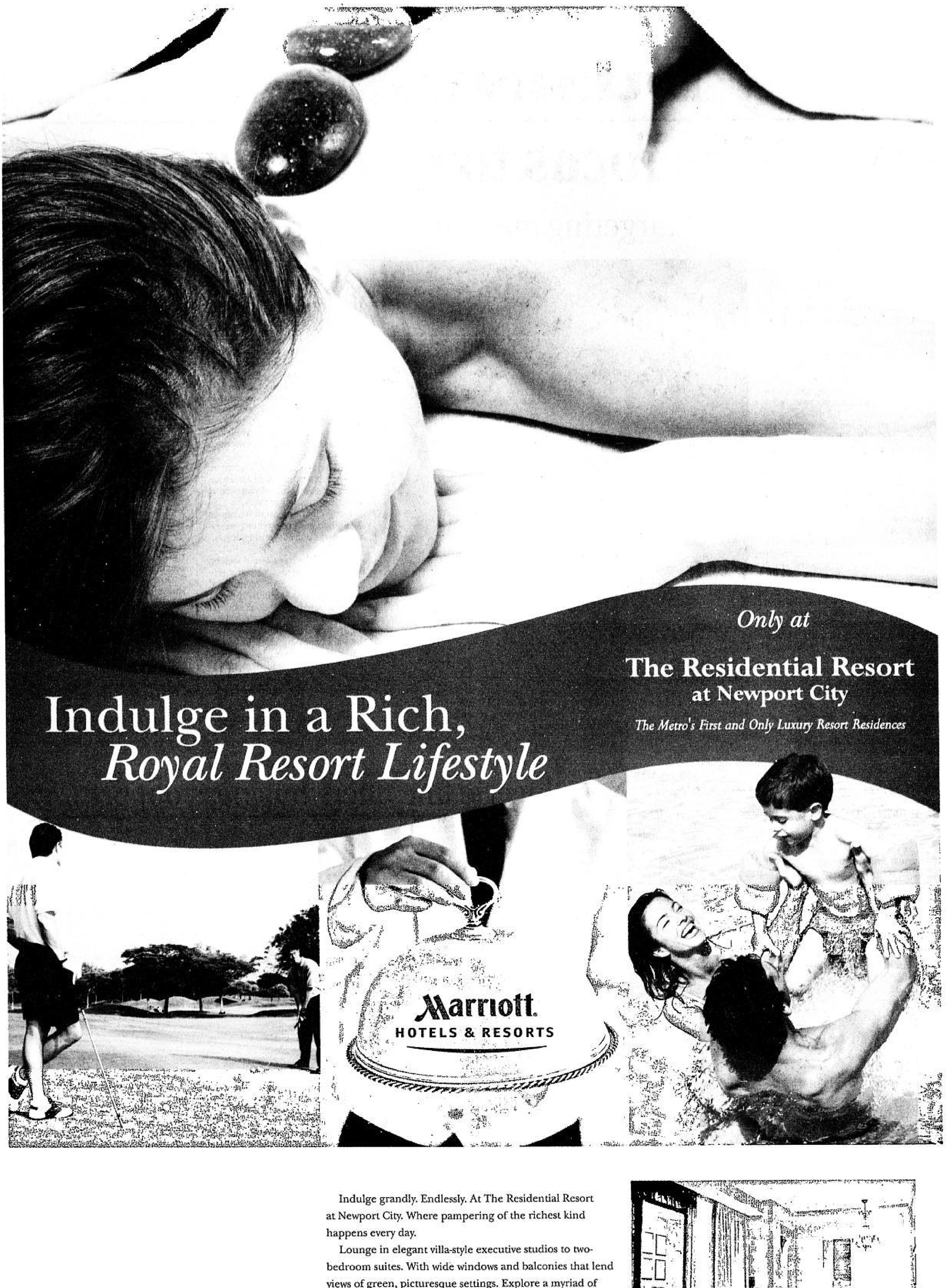
The cost of his mailing was a tiny fraction of the size of his profits. There's not a chance of reveling in a healthy response like that unless you're targeting your mailing with absolute precision. It's something you're going to have to do in a world where postal charges and paper prices are both slated to increase. Unless you're hitting the bull's-eye, you're wasting your marketing investment.

Personalized precision

The benefit of precision is that it allows you to get personal. I know of a nonprofit organization that increased its response rate 668 percent by treating its big donors special—mailing to them with a handwritten envelope using a commemorative stamp and a handwritten 25-word note at the end of the letter. The cost to do this was low, indeed. But the payoff proved the value of precision and narrow-mindedness in a guerrilla marketing attack. Precision and constancy. Those are your allies.

Jay Conrad Levinson is the author of the best-selling marketing series in history, "Guerrilla Marketing," plus 30 other books which have been translated in 41 languages. Levinson taught guerrilla marketing for 10 years at the University of California in Berkeley and practiced it in the United States—as senior vice president at J. Walter Thompson, and in Europe, as creative director and board member at Leo Burnett Advertising.

E-mail questions to MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net. God bless!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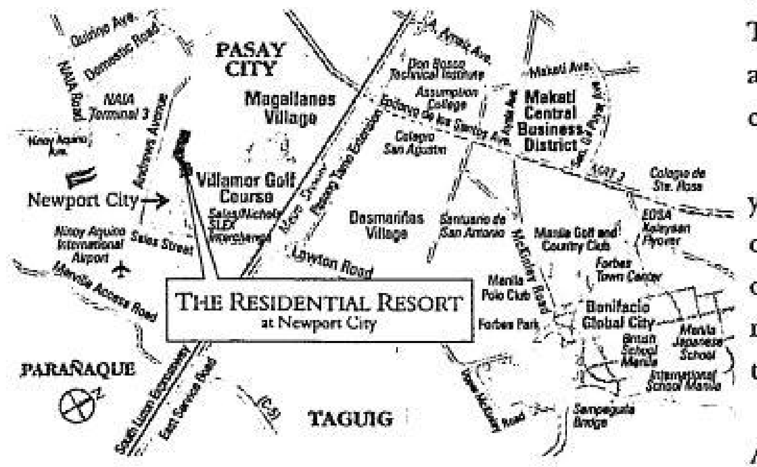
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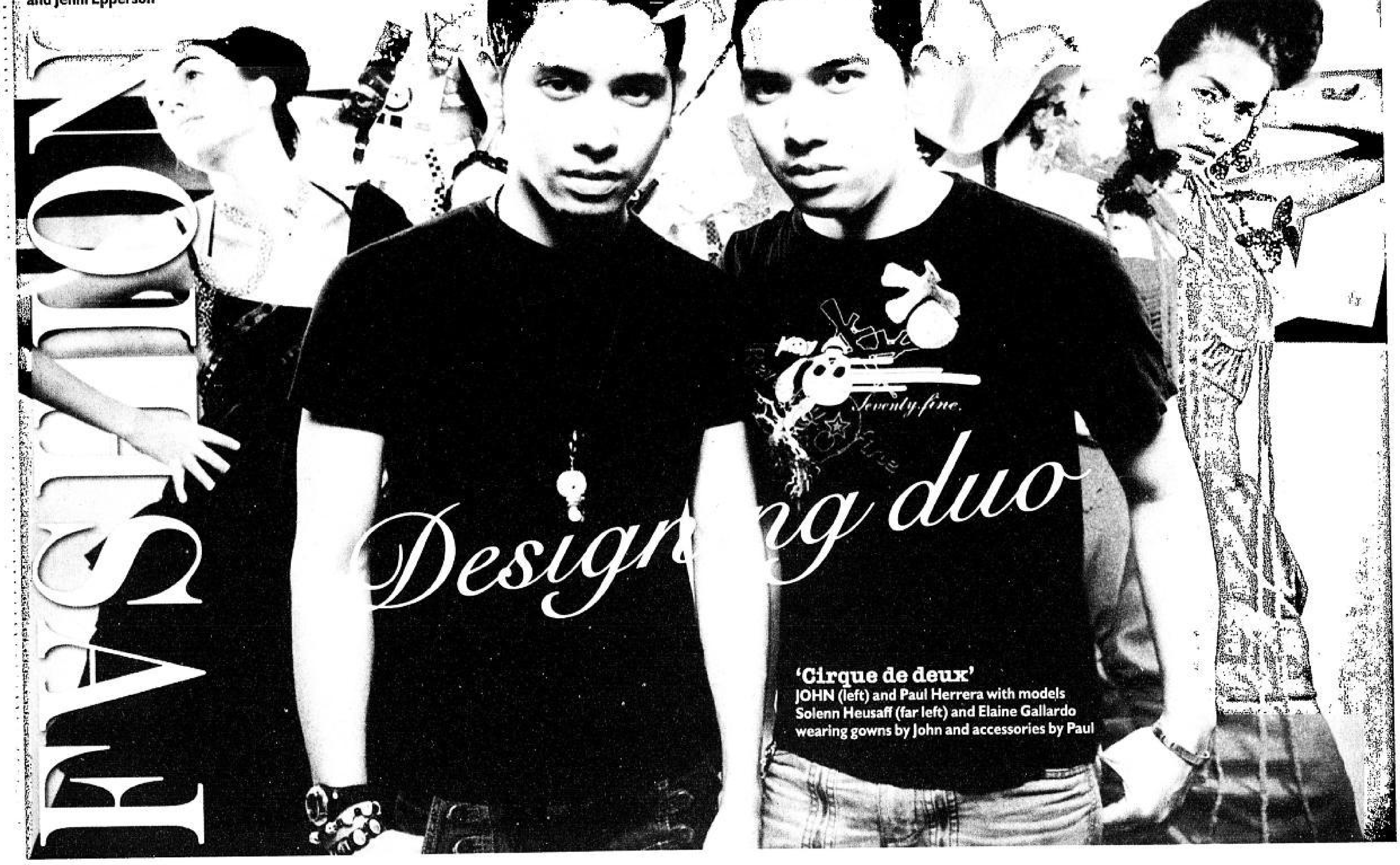


Designing duo

'Cirque de deux'
JOHN (left) and Paul Herrera with models Solenn Heusaff (far left) and Elaine Gallardo wearing gowns by John and accessories by Paul

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

THEY'RE A STUDY IN CONTRASTS, and yet identical twins John and Paul Herrera complement each other like bread and butter, milk and coffee—heck, like *mangga* and *bagoong* even.

They are 25 years old, the youngest in a family of six and both in the fashion design field. The similarities end there, however.

Where John, the clothing designer, is edgy and intense, Paul, the accessories designer, is gifted with what seems to be a lightness of being and an easy, approachable air. Where John favors dark hues and experimental designs that push boundaries, Paul leans toward the theatrical, glittery and dramatic.

They are separately making waves in the fashion business and have very unique offerings for discerning fashionistas. Their design approach couldn't be more diverse.

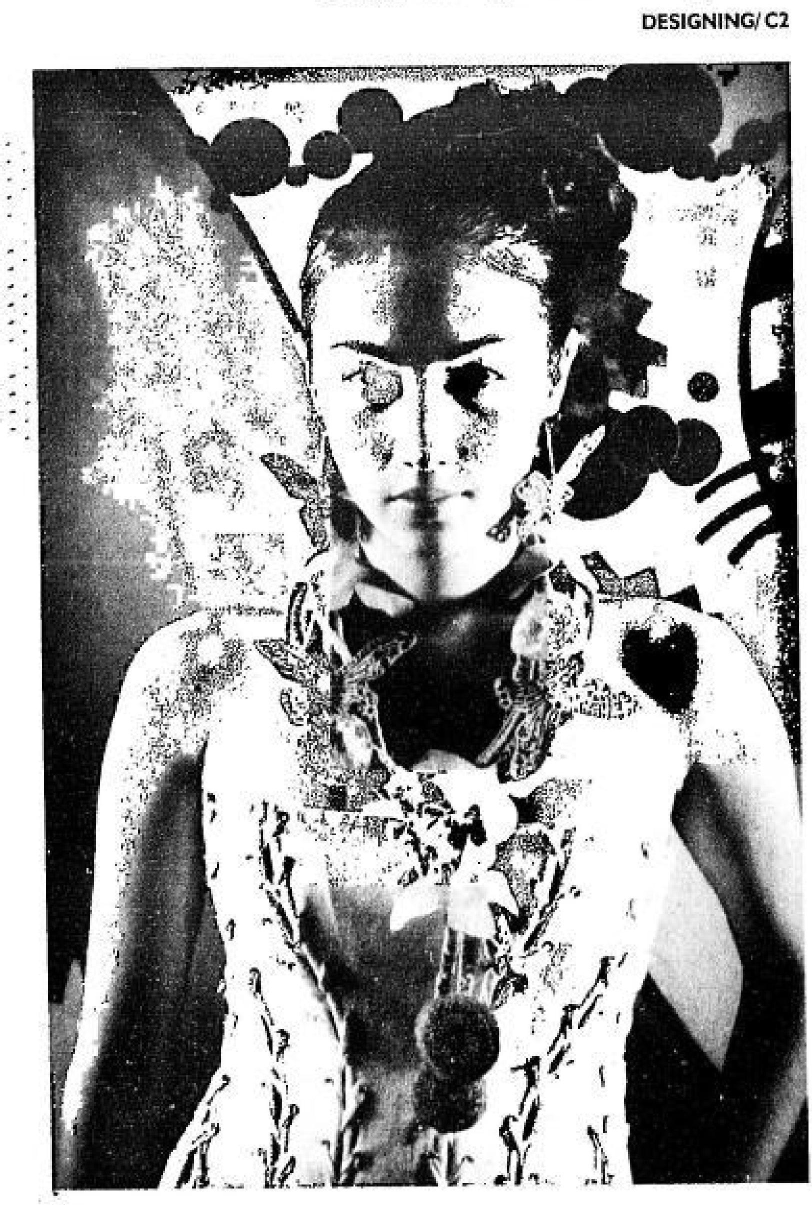
"I don't reference flowers, beauty queens and fashion spreads. I reference things that people never talk about, like death and disease," says John. That he likes to challenge the mind is apparent in his complicated but arresting (would you believe, even maggot-inspired?) designs.

Paul, on the other hand, aims to create pieces that people can easily appreciate.

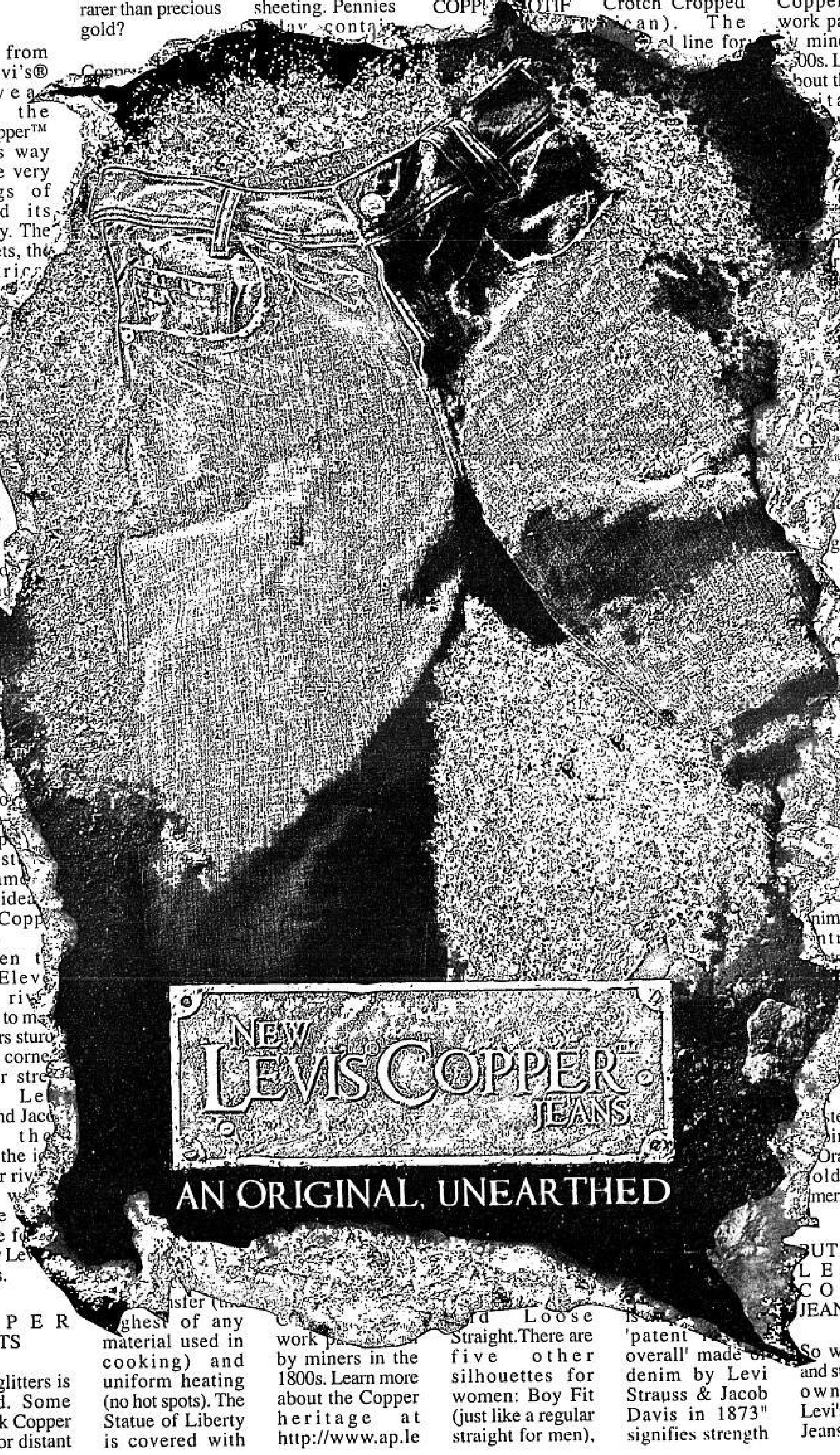
"I have a thing for lightness. I want accessories to be light and easy to wear," he explains.

Perhaps this explains his seeming obses-

DESIGNING/ C2



Green monarch
LACE-UP canvas corset by John Herrera; neckpiece of green taffeta braids with sequined circular and burnt fabric butterfly appliqués



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The latest from Levi's® n wea n, the Copper™ es way the very ngs of nd its uty. The copper rivets, the asymmetric hand-s seams, matchless appeal... say everyth changes, basic is stay.

HOW IT STARTED

Miners, lo and farm long wor work the pa last b seams would

In 187 Strauss ga Davis, an o Reno tailo make a p trousers st Davis came with the idea putting Copp rivets t strengthen t pants. Elev Copper ri were used to ma the trousers sturd at pocket corne and other stre points. Le Strauss and Jac Davis the patented the i of Copper riv jeans, w became prototype f legendary Le 501 jeans.

COPPER NUGGETS

All that glitters is not gold. Some may think Copper is the poor distant relative of gold, but did you know that Copper is rarer than precious gold?

Copper

ster (th ghest of any material used in cooking) and uniform heating (no hot spots). The Statue of Liberty is covered with more than 200,000 pounds of Copper sheeting. Pennies today contain

work pa by miners in the 1800s. Learn more about the Copper heritage at http://www.ap.levi.com/index.html?redirect=phunk

COPPE MOTIF

d Loose Straight.There are five other silhouettes for women: Boy Fit (just like a regular straight for men), Boot Cut, Skinny Skinny and Slim Straight and Low Crotch Cropped can). The al line for

'patent overall' made of denim by Levi Strauss & Jacob Davis in 1873" signifies strength and durability, just like the pair of ultra-reliable Copper-riveted work pants worn miners in the 00s. Learn more bout the Copper itage at www.ap.le index.htm t=phunk

MOTIF

nuing the r motif, the fted button ets are in classic colour.

ED ET

onal line r the same as plus print on pocket gs for all , and on the waistband en's jeans. o feature laps over kets and tches on scoops.

SIC IM G

me in k-tone finishing ed cast nim, with subtle ntrasts and that include rated paper , and ing. inishes in names echo the tern Cowboy iration, such Orange County, oldRush, and merican Cowboy.

UT ON YOU LEVI'S® COPPER™ JEANS

So walk the talk and strut your very own pair of Levi's® Copper™ Jeans.

Sister act
ON SOLENN: jersey, tulle and Lycra dress by John Herrera. On Elaine: ruched Lycra, jersey and tulle dress by John Herrera; Neckpiece of burnt fabric butterfly appliqués and guitar strings by Paul Herrera

Identical twins John and Paul Herrera complement each other like bread and butter, milk and coffee—heck, like 'mangga' and 'bagoong' even

Designing duo

Puzzles
Lycra jersey hooded dress with fabric puzzle appliqué detail by John Herrera

Clothes John Herrera (tel. 0917-8337625)
Accessories Paul Herrera (tel. 0921-7813655)
Mixed-media painting collaboration
(on background) by John Herrera,
Paul Herrera, Oliver Herrera and Desiree Mendoza

Urban camouflage
ON SOLENN: twill bolero with beaded poison detail, treated tank top, twill pants, all by John Herrera; earrings of burnt fabric butterfly appliqués and wire by Paul Herrera.
On Elaine: asymmetrical upholstery dress by John Herrera; "monarch hat" of acrylic and metal beaded woven funnel, and burnt fabric butterfly appliqués by Paul Herrera

From page C1

sion with butterflies, which dominate his current designs.

Promising beginnings

The twins' inclination toward the design field was already evident in high school. John ended up designing prom dresses for all 25 of his female classmates, while Paul sketched costumes. But it wasn't until college that John realized fashion designing was something he could really get into: "During our foundation-day fashion show, I ended up designing everything and reworking pieces. I was sitting on the makeshift platform stage after the show when I realized that I could do this forever."

He then decided to leave his computer course to study fashion. He eventually studied at The Fashion Institute of the Philippines under Shannon Pamaong.

"I learned everything about making clothes, discipline in running a business, and coming on time from him," says John.

In 2004, he joined the Philippine Design Competition and was named Mega Magazine's Most Promising Young Designer. To date, he continues to grab the attention of jaded fashionistas with creations that aim to challenge silhouettes and standards of beauty.

Theatrical influences

Inspired by his brother, Paul also left his computer course to take up theater arts at the University of the Philippines. His course was on technical theater production so he learned to hand-stitch, work with wires and let his imagination run wild while designing headdresses, breast plates, armbands and the like.

Shortly after college, he worked for Bea Valdez, whom he names as his mentor.

"I learned a lot from Bea—from texture, details, combining colors, to stones and semi-precious stones."

He recently joined the Philippine Fashion Design Competition 2007 (John paid for his entrance fee as a gift), where he won the grand prize for accessories design and Metro Magazine's best design for accessories. His entry was made of treated satin and taffeta monarch butterflies and guitar strings.

Power of two

John and Paul continue to inspire and draw from each other's strengths while establishing a strong presence in the local market.

John, who is a member of the Young Designers' Guild, says: "I get educated by Paul. I hate beadwork but I'm learning that it can be refreshing at times. Paul is a brilliant artist and his award proves that he is the best this year".

Paul, on the other hand, has this to say about his twin: "John has been my guiding light—even when I design. He's very avant-garde while I'm not, but he taught me to love the dark palettes he favors. I respect John as a designer and I think he's one of the best."

The future is obviously bright for this designing duo. The competition may be tough (not between them, mind you) but John and Paul are well-equipped with boundless talent and the right attitude. Of course, it also helps that they have each other to lean on whenever the inevitable challenges go their way.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

Photographer Steve Tirona
Photographer's assistants Vernon Perez
and Kiko Escora
Sittings editor Millet Arzaga
Makeup artist Jigs Mayuga
of L'Oreal Paris
Hair Stylist Vianney Guese (tel. 0915-2089007)
for L'Oreal Paris Studio Line
Nail Technician Melanie Illustracion
of Nail Spa
Models Solenn Heusaff
and Elaine Gallardo

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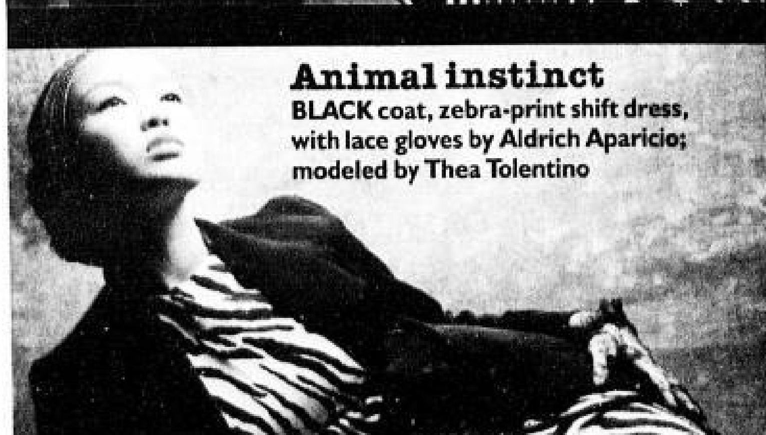
10 years of trailblazing fashi

Printed matter
GRAPHIC black-and-white wrap dress by Michelle Lim; modeled by **Gia Arriola**



Animal instinct
BLACK coat, zebra-print shift dress, with lace gloves by **Aldrich Aparicio**; modeled by **Thea Tolentino**

PHILIPPINE FASHION WEEK 2007 welcomes the summer season with an opening salvo today. The affair runs until April 1.

Annually staged by Runway Productions, spearheaded by industry stalwarts Audie and Joey Espino, the event celebrates 10 years as a premier showcase of Filipino talent and ingenuity, with no less than the big names of fashion, beauty and lifestyle serving as both presenters and spectators.

This year's 10-day extravaganza will offer 1,738 creations, 600 models, 120 designers, 10 local and international brands.

"We are very proud of how Philippine Fashion Week has grown and evolved through the years. As such an achievement requires a lot from everyone involved. Our main objective has always been to create a platform that will showcase just how exceptional Filipinos are in their craft and, in doing so, help put the Philippines on the world fashion map. The number of years [Fashion Week] has lasted is in itself a great achievement," says Espino.

The first five days will be hosted by the Rockwell Tent at the Rockwell Center in Makati, beginning with a grand "Opening Gala Night" on March 23, at 6:30 p.m. The shows continue on March 24, 3 p.m. with "The Premier Collection A," while "The Design Fusion Collection" debuts at 6:30 p.m. on the same day.

On March 25, 3 p.m., "The Premier Collection B" takes centerstage, followed by "The Luxe Wear Collection" by the ANC Channel at 6:30 p.m. "The Premier Collection C" shows on March 26, 3 p.m., while world-renowned hair expert Wella takes the stage at 6:30 p.m. with "Wella Unveils Modern Trends and Visions 07," featuring designers from the Young Designers' Guild.

The March 27 fashion-fest kicks off at 3 p.m. with a Triumph show, followed by "The Grand Allure Collection" by the Lifestyle Network at 7:30 p.m.

The event then crosses over to the Glorietta Activity Center for a lineup of exciting catwalk presentations which include the collection shows of popular brands Guess, Guess Kids and Mango on March 28, at 6 p.m.; Calliope, Urban & Company, Skin Food and Terranova on March 29, 6 p.m.; with the anticipated "Vogue Fashion Party" sponsored by Absolute Vodka at the Embassy Club, The Fort, at 10 p.m.; Penshoppe on March 30, at 6 p.m.; and culminating with three feature shows on March 31—Memo at 12 p.m., For Me at 3 p.m. and Oxygen at 6 p.m.

Philippine Fashion Week 2007 concludes with a special presentation of Studio 23's newest hit show, "Ugly Betty," followed by the "Grand Finale," on April 1, 6 p.m. Hewlett-Packard will award the Best Original Design during this year's closing ceremony.

Ca
ZEB
moc

Summer in style

OU CAN HAVE YOUR OWN ummer makeover, too. Arm ourself with these tips on ow to look your most fabuous this sun-kissed season.

ashion

zza Gonzales-Agana of 818 foresees:

- White fix. White with pastels, white with metallics, white with khakis. It's the safest, cleanest, freshest color you can wear on and off the beach.
- A lot of baby-doll and trapeze blouses and dresses
- Boyfriend pants! A more forgiving alternative to the skinny jeans. Think of the loose-straight-cut pants your boyfriend wears. Laid-back, cool and comfy.
- Wide-leg pants, although they're not for everyone as you may end up looking pudgy.
- Wrap, belted tops in stretch cotton or linen that cinches the waist for a slimmer silhouette
- Ballet-flats, peep-toe sandals for shoes
- Chunky cuffs, long necklaces and funky beaded pieces for accessories

air

ourd Ramos of Emphasis alon says:

- Chic apple bob is coming up fast.
- Drop all rebonding plans! Opt for soft sexy waves.
- Ideal cut is full multi-layered with fringes.
- Sport side-swept, layered bangs; or strong China-chop bangs.
- No more full-head hair color. Highlighting should only be in done in very chosen parts.
- Play around with browns—light, golden or chocolate.
- It's extremes for guys—either go clean cut with long fringes or grow it to sexy shoulder level. But please, no more just-got-of-bed Koreanovela hero hair.

akeup

rica Ilacad of Tigi suggests:

- A brush of Tigi Bronzer. It comes in two colors you can blend for a healthy glow without roasting under the sun for hours.
- Dumb Blonde, a high-gloss colorless goo perfect for just about anyone
- Glam Whip, a light- to medium-coverage mousse foundation with very soft and silky finish. We found it easy to use especially for the Filipino skin tone with warm, yellow undertones.
- Tigi eyeshadow palette which has eight basics multi-tasking shades, you can use the darker ones as eyeliner, too
- Cream to powder eyeshadows that don't crease even on oily skin in hot weather
- Self-sharpening lipstick and lipliner in one, like Lip Crayon in Perfect Red and Perfect Pink

Irene C. Perez

SHAPE brows with the help of expert threader Mae of Emphasis.

LOURD says "Lighten up those tresses for a fun summer look!"

LOOK fresh and polished with just a touch of makeup.

PAIR UP metallics with bold colors for a fun, sexy look. Gold, belted spaghetti-strap wrap blouse with beading, and Thai silk teal wide-leg pants from 8818

Mesmerizing morena

By Irene C. Perez

FASHION POLICY SAYS LESS is more and being low maintenance rocks, but every lady deserves to go all-out *kikay* and glammed up every now and then.

With a flick of INQUIRER Fashion's magic wand, one sporty *morena* was taken out of her tracksuit and given a fresh, polished 'do perfect for summer.

BEFORE

Meet 28-year-old Rachel "Sheng" P. Buenavista, a newlywed fitness instructor who can beat any dude in volleyball, table tennis, even basketball. Sheng has always been one of the boys, and her wardrobe consists mainly of shirts, jeans, jogging pants and trainers. Makeup for her means a light dusting of baby powder and a swipe of lip gloss.

"I am not really into dressing up, and I hate blow-drying," she said in Filipino. "I just usually comb my hair, put it in a ponytail and that's how I look for the whole day! Besides, I can only wear gymwear while at work. But since I just got married, I think I need something new."

Dusky beauty

How to give this 5'7" dusky beauty a modernized feminine look to make the most out of her svelte figure and Filipina features? Enter the army of fairy godparents—Lourd Ramos for hair and makeup, Erica Ilacad for hair care and Izza Gonzales-Agana for her clothes—and now we have a very sexy, summer-ready charmer.

We can't wait to see the look on Sheng's husband after this makeover, and we bet it would be honeymoon for them all over again!

Hair: fun sexy waves

Sheng has rebonded hair, so Lourd took care to choose the best color, treatment and cut for her. Hair coloring alone was a production because her hair had to be shaded, tinted and toned to achieve the color best suited to her morena skintone. Too dark hues would make her look dirty, and too light would make her (gasp!) blonde.

DROP the bl[illegible] reds and blues and go for the citr[illegible] punch! Empir[illegible] cut [illegible] deep V-[illegible] [illegible]

"Her hair is super dark, we had to lighten it a little to give her a softer look," said Lourd. "We don't want to veer away from her natural hair color."

Lourd used low lighting-effect highlighting technique to give Sheng's dark tresses light- and golden-brown highlights. Then he wove her hair into very thin sections (diamond sectioning) and applied Davines Masque in shade 6.3 for a light-brown tint.

Next process was toning and emulsification, where a touch of mahogany was applied. Also, Sheng's treated hair needed heavy moisturizer like Tigi S Factor Serious Conditioner.

Lourd put her hair in big velcro rollers, had it air-dried, and gave it a shiny finish with a few pats of S Factor Dream Drops, a serum that left a sweet yummy watermelon smell.

AFTER

HANDS-DOWN, from the beach to the office, it's white for summer. Stylized belted wrap top with kimono sleeves and mandarin collar, cinched on the waist to give the illusion of a tiny waist from 8818

Don't bother straightening your hair pin-straight this summer, because fun wavy locks are preferred. Lourd also applied S Factor Creamy Molding Wax and lightly blow-dried Sheng's hair. He ironed the ends inwards to come up with soft romantic bouncy curls.

And oh, please don't forget the brows whenever you get your hair colored! Lourd lightened Sheng's brows a bit to go with her new highlights.

Makeup: 'bronze sunset diva'

"I used to be bothered by my dark complexion when I was younger," Sheng said. "But when I taught cardio exercises in Thailand, *mas maputi pa ko sa kanila!*"

Sheng's skintone spelled summer, so trust Lourd to give her a "bronze sunset diva" look by enhancing her features with a lot of sheer golds and browns.

"She can have strong lips or strong eyes, but never both," he said. "Choose yellow, oranges, lime green; pastels may be used but should be blended with a base color. Lips must be orange-bronzy in satin finish for muted elegance."

Lourd applied a primer on her face, a very important thing because it makes makeup last longer and easier to apply. Sheng's good skin needed no concealer, just an ample coverage of Bedhead foundation in Glamour Whipped No. 1.

For the eyes, he brushed on gold Tigi Bedhead Cyberoptics Eyeshadow on the entire lid, contoured it with Velvet, and accented it with a few strokes of Copper.

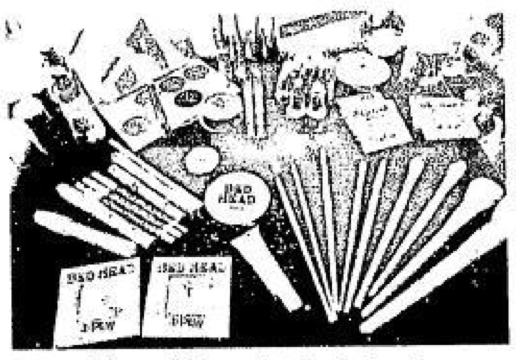
Tip: Apply Lime Green eyeshadow on the inner corners to open up the eyes, then blend well. Lourd lined Sheng's eyes with Fat Fun! black eyeliner, and applied a thick coat of Eyes Love It! brown mascara for a subtle smoky look.

Mae threaded Sheng's brows for a good arch, then Lourd carefully brushed on brown eyeshadow with an angle brush to fill in the brows.

A light brushing of Glamma Powder bronzer finished off her sexy "sunset" look.

For the lips, Bedhead lipstick in Hope was applied, topped with Shine Junkie Lip Gloss in Beige for a full plump pout.

E-mail the author at iperez@inquirer.com.ph


BE a golden golddess with the help of Bedhead cosmetics (available in May).

PAMPER over-processed locks with S Factor's range of products.

Photography Jim Guiao Punzalan
Styling Izza Gonzales-Agana
Hair and makeup Lourd Ramos
of Emphasis Salon (4030117, 4030119),
using Bedhead S Factor hair products,
and Bedhead makeup (available soon at Salon 546, Essensuals Toni & Guy and Emphasis Salon)
Model Rachel P. Buenavista
Clothes 8818 Fashion Design Studio (8976296)
Shoes Sapato Manila

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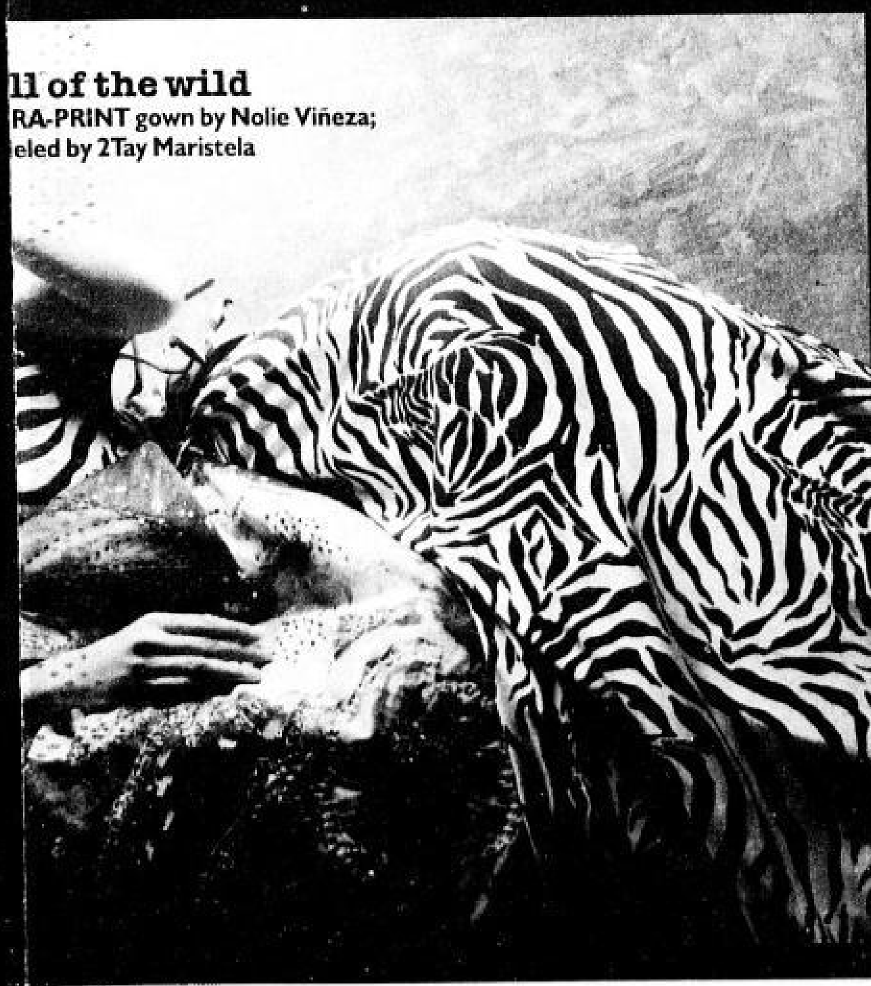
ion

Photography Dominique James
Styling Joey Espino
Makeup Toto Bagamasbad

ll of the wild

RA-PRINT gown by Nolie Viñeza;
eled by 2Tay Maristela



Bubble wrap

WHITE bustier top and textured black bubble skirt with pinstriped hat, knee-high socks and fingerless gloves by Joel Baustista; modeled by Christine Bayer

Balenciaga Fall 2007 Collection

FASHION BUZZ

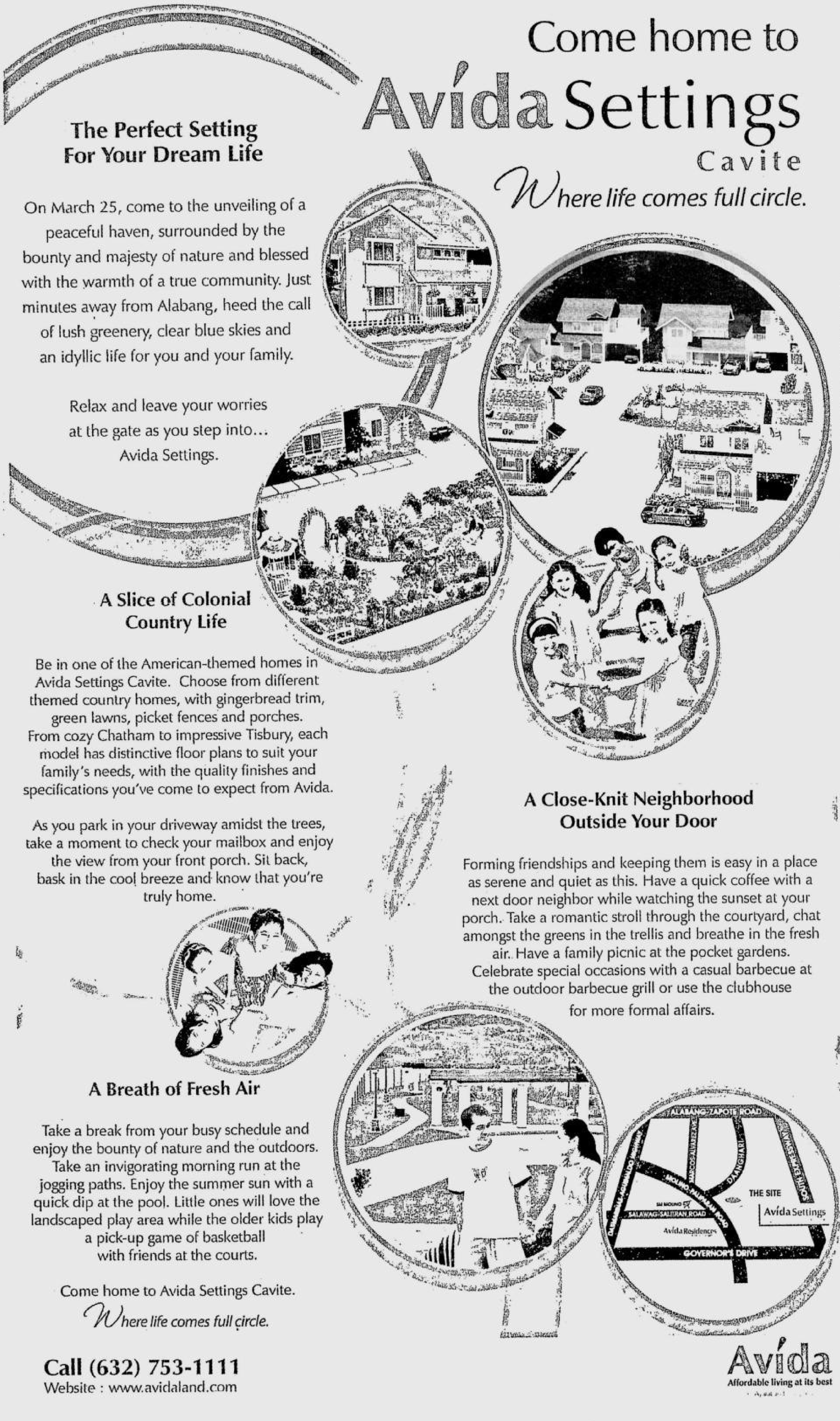
Hot, haute, hot news!

Tribal trails

WHILE DESIGNERS IN MANILA ARE SHOWING their futuristic summer pieces, their counterparts all over the world are just about done presenting their Fall/Winter 2007 collections.

As expected, style-setter Nicolas Ghesquière is once again leading the pack. After his armored, "Tron"-inspired collection for summer, he zoomed back to earth with a tribal-inspired collection that mixed a slew of global inspirations such as Ikat prints on scarf dresses matched with prep-school blazers, or sculpted jackets worn with stylized track pants. His models even sported white face-paint that had a tribal slant to suit his ethnic yet ultra-modern stylings.

PHOTOS: WWW.STYLE.COM



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On March 25, come to the unveiling of a peaceful haven, surrounded by the bounty and majesty of nature and blessed with the warmth of a true community. Just minutes away from Alabang, heed the call of lush greenery, clear blue skies and an idyllic life for you and your family.

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RACHEL ZOE with actress Mischa Barton and designer Matthew Williamson

The way to Zoe!

STYLIST to the stars wears Prada.

PINT-SIZED BUT IN-DEMAND stylist Rachel Zoe will act as creative consultant for fashion giant Halston, as she sits on the advisory board together with Tamara Mellon, founder and president of Jimmy Choo's line of shoes. Hollywood film producer Harvey Weinstein, who recently teamed up with a private equity firm to buy the renowned brands, is responsible for this fashion coup.

Weinstein, Mellon and Zoe's goal is to revitalize the fashion brand which stands for timeless modernity, elegance and glamour and continues to influence generations of designers. Meanwhile, Zoe carries on with her styling duties as she works on high-profile fashion campaigns while dressing up young Hollywood royals like Mischa Barton, Lindsay Lohan and Keira Knightley, to name a few.

ZOE with Anne Hathaway

Contributing Editor
Ria Francisco-Prieto

LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

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International Fashion Week looks

BEAUTY

CHARLOTTE Tilbury for Alexander McQueen: "The look today is Elizabeth Taylor and Cleopatra."

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prieto

I WISH I COULD HAVE BEEN there to experience the energy and witness the creativity that happens during the fashion week in New York, London, Milan, and Paris. But since I couldn't even get one foot in, I will just take a peek through the Internet.

More than clothes, the hair and makeup, executed for particular designers, arouse my curiosity. Besides they're easier to do and copy. No one can ever say they're a fake! I mean, have you ever heard of someone sporting a fake Gucci look

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Looks adapted from Fashion Week looks

From page D1

in terms of makeup or hair?

Here are some looks—and quotes—straight out of style.com that might give you inspiration:

Dick Page for Michael Kors

"She's always going to be healthy and warm and glowing. She wants the full fantasia of the American dream. She's got enough money to follow the sun, so we just color her in and send her out there."

My take: It pays to be tan. If you really care for your skin you have to pay for the right products to protect you or better yet get the best sunless tanners you can get a hold on. It does make people look sexier than being fair.

Dick Page for Marc Jacobs

"Much to their chagrin, we're bleaching the girls' eyebrows and then we're sketching in the finer brow. It's pretty monochrome."

My take: This is a trick that actually makes girls look clean. When you dye your hair a certain shade, it is better if your brows are the same shade (I'm not talking about blue hair of course). It also brightens up your face and accentuates your eyes.

Orlando Pita for Derek Lam

"We're tying leather strips all around the hair to hold it together and bind it. Derek told us he wanted the girls to look very urban and tough."

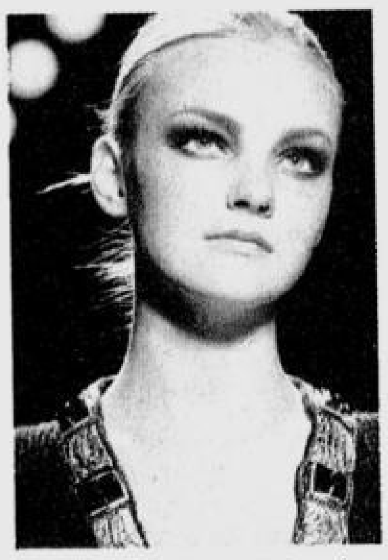
Tom Pecheux for Derek Lam

"I don't think everyone is nasty and mean in the city. Tough can be powerful without being hard."

My take: It is nice to see girls who don't look like Barbie Dolls but human beings with their own quirks and uniqueness. The punk rugged look actually looks good on a lot of girls. I love this look. Girl Power! It is so in-control and not necessarily polished.

Pat McGrath for Oscar de la Renta

"We're focusing all about the eyes, all about beautiful skin. I thought it would be really good if this girl looks sophisticated and



smoldering, with a slight edge. It's all about that pale mouth and that smoked eye."

My take: Balance is important. Make a choice. Do you want the focus on your eyes or lips? But everything does start with good skin.

Lucia Pieroni for Vera Wang

"The mood is a Russian winter, just before the Revolution. The Bolsheviks have got very heavy eyebrows, very clean, natural skin. The Czarinas are very pale, with really, really deep red lips."

My take: Keeping your eyebrows thick and well-groomed will actually make you look younger.

Eugene Souleiman for Paul Smith Women

"The hair is quite masculine, but with very sexy, feminine, wild curly ends. You've got a very elegant shape, with a soft texture on top, so it looks very pretty and the hair will float and move."

Petros Petrohilos for Paul Smith Women

"It's quite a graphic look, with neon colors. We're using a pink fuchsia line on the top of the lid and a black line close to the lashes, quite a bit of mascara, and a bit of contouring, and we're lightening the lips with a bit of concealer. The skin is kept quite fresh."

My take: If you are not confident with your makeup skills, trust your hair stylist to do something different for you.

Charlotte Tilbury for Alberta Ferretti

"The look is polished. Just a bit of concealer where needed. Not too much foundation. A bit of sculpting—we're using this bronzer to sculpt under the cheekbone. We're curling the eyelashes and using lots of mascara on top of the eyes, and a little lip conditioner."

My take: This is an easy polished everyday look that most

people can pull off. Very low maintenance and without having to compromise class.

Samantha Hillerby for Burberry Prorsum

"We chose to do very natural, simplistic hair, which is very much the essence of Burberry. It's Joan of Arc, a little bit medieval, but there's this punky element to it."

My take: Find the right hair product suitable for your hair type to maximize its natural beauty.

Pat McGrath for Gucci

"We have a very glamorous, strong woman. We were looking at makeup from the '40s: strong mouth, beautifully groomed brow, beautiful skin, dark mouth."

My take: Good skin is flaunt worthy. So if you are gifted with it, all you really need to glam up is red lipstick.

Peter Philips for Jil Sander

"Luminous skin, with a soft gray on the eye that is hardly visible—but it's there—and a soft sculpting of the face, in a very subtle way."

My take: To enhance the natural glow of your skin, blush on luminizers and even out your skin tone.

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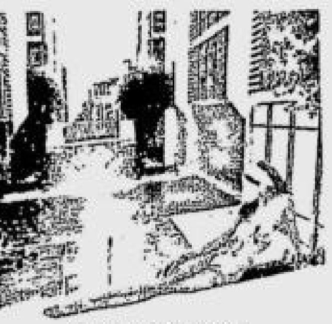
Family Spa



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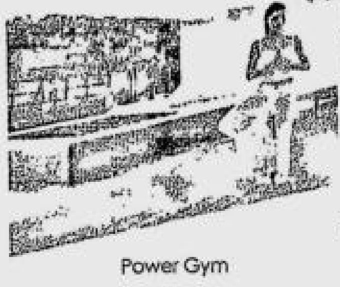

Power Gym

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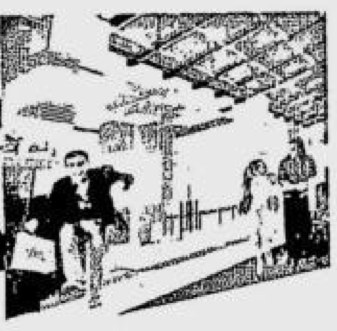

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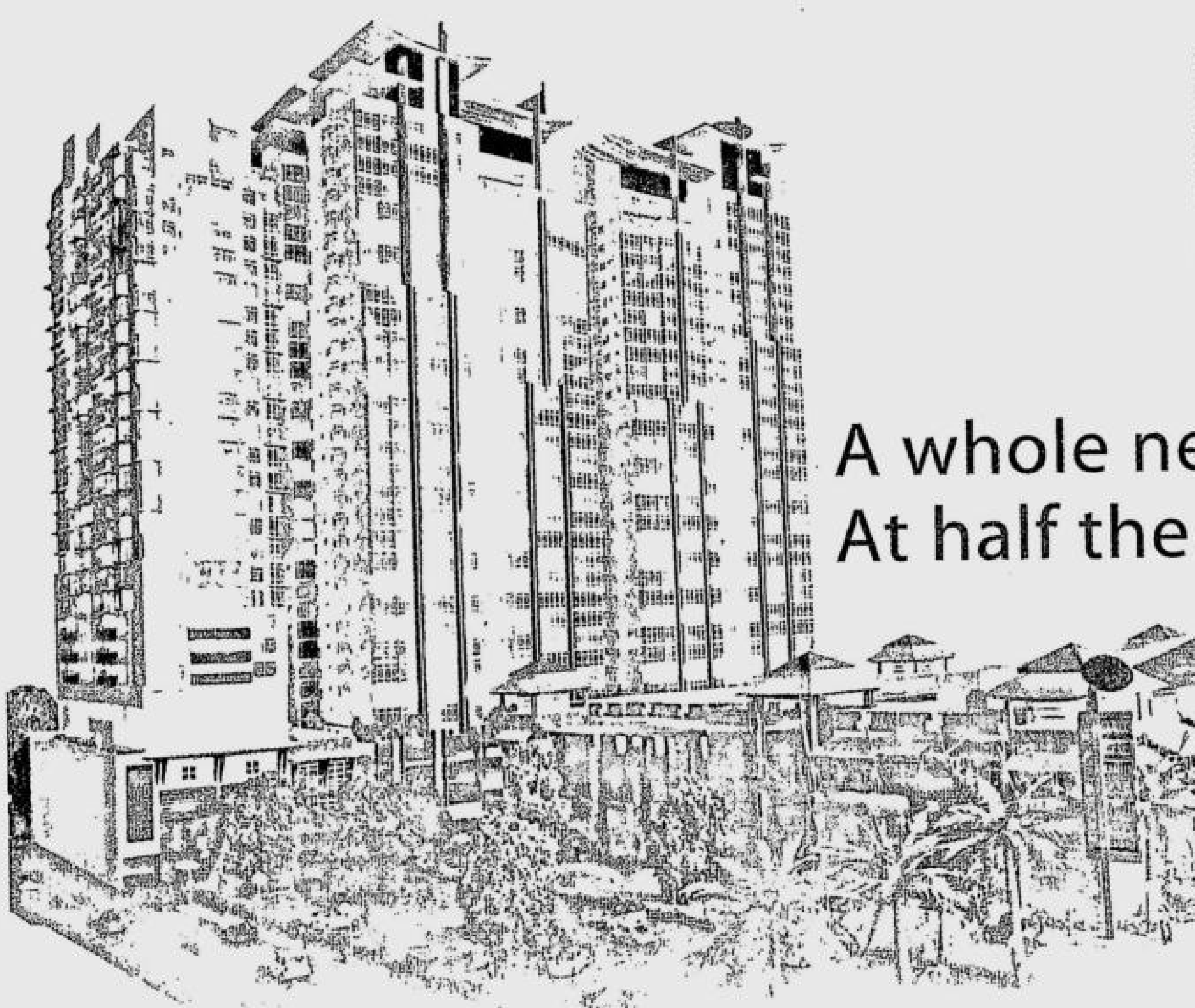

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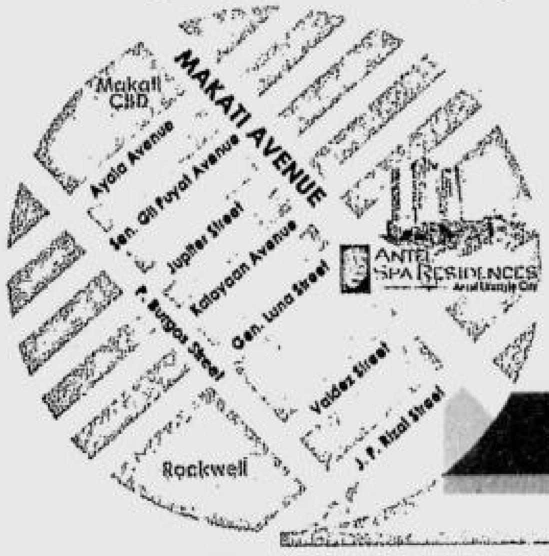

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Color and care for hair

By Irene C. Perez

PINAYS ARE OBSESSED WITH CHANGING their hair color as much as having a fairer skin tone. Nothing wrong with that, except that most salon-colored hair ends up stiff, dry and damaged. Worse, some women end up as badly done redheads or bimbo blondes!

Hair coloring is very tricky. The color you see on the bottle isn't exactly what you'll have after a dyeing session.

International haircare brand L'Oreal aims to save us from further hair-coloring booboos through the Color Expert Club, where hairdressers undergo rigid tests and exams to perfect the art of hair coloring.

"We want to professionalize hair coloring in the country by reinforcing hairdresser expertise through intensive academy training," says Anna Andres, Technico commercial manager for L'Oreal. "We want to give consumers stylists they can trust."

In L'Oreal's Color Expert Club, hairdressers undergo rigid tests and exams to perfect the art of hair coloring

Free membership

Membership in the Color Expert Club is offered free to all stylists and salon owners who use L'Oreal products. The latest batch of Color Experts recently graduated, and of the 154 who took the exam, only 60 passed. They went through a weeklong, whole-day course on a raft of hair subjects. L'Oreal provided all the materials.

"We see hairdressers as magicians," Andres says. "And we want them to be able to serve customers better."

The program, which started in 2003, offers the following subjects: Color Keys, a starter subject; Color Dimension, which tackles hair characteristics, color levels and lightening; natural and artificial pigments; health and safety usage of products; proper diagnosis of hair condition; and analysis of mixture and development time for each desired shade.

"We in the academy have several trainers. Four of them are hairdressers and salon owners themselves. I have one education manager who has been with L'Oreal for 15 years," says Andres.

Aside from hair-coloring subjects, Color Expert students are also given classes on rebonding, digital and traditional perm, and basic and advance cutting. They even undergo a salon management course held at the College of Business Administration of UP Diliman.

Common mistakes

There is a salon offering hair coloring in practically every corner of this country. So what are the common mistakes hairdressers should avoid?

Andres says many colorists think a higher peroxide level would make the process quicker and the color last longer, but all it does is damage the hair and make it dull.

"The color escapes with higher peroxide, and after one day, the color is gone!" she says.

Colorists should also be very careful not to apply color on the scalp, which can cause allergies. And use only professionally made shampoos and conditioner to maintain the hair color.

Summer hairstyles

With the summer season kicking in, Andres suggests some fitting hairstyles. "Super curly hair is out. Better opt for asymmetrical cuts with fringes for a fresh, fun look."

The length still depends on one's lifestyle, but for the sun-kissed season, short hair is preferred, though layered on the front and with fringes added to create contour.

TRUST the experts and save your locks from coloring abuse.

Also, try out "nude" colors, but be sure to have them blended well. "The in thing now is to use two shades to produce a seamless color. There should be no obvious streaks," Andres says.

For Pinays with yellow skin tones, Andres says muted browns and orange should work best. Consider your skintone when choosing a hair color.

That's where the Color Expert members will be of help. They are trained to prevent you from sporting a cut that can make you plump-faced or sport artificial-looking hair color, while at the same time helping you choose maintenance products that will keep the color vibrant and your hair healthy. These are services you won't get from a stylist who hasn't undergone the same rigorous training.

Color Expert membership lasts for a year, and stylists can renew their licenses every year by signing up and undergoing retraining, much like going to a salon school where they learn new techniques and trends every year.

Among the yearlong perks and privileges offered to Color Experts are marketing support such as a hairdresser plaque they can put in their salons; look-and-learn classes; working with a panel of experts for product/service testing that they can avail themselves of; product allowance worth P2,000; and a chance to train in Malaysia or Singapore.

Bright colors at the Philippine Fashion Week

THIS YEAR'S EDITION OF Philippine Fashion Week sees Avon Color releasing its hottest looks through its makeup artist Jen Delica.

Delica shares that this year's focus in makeup application has more freedom, with no particular part of the face outshining the rest.

"What's important is to veer away from the usual neutral shades of browns and greys. The overly made-up look is out, but colors are still definitely in. Lip colors are no longer nude but red or peachy, such as those in Avon Color's Summer Bliss Collection. The eyes are bright with a pop of color plus dramatic long lashes. Eyebrows are worn thick but well-groomed with a natural shape."

For this season, Delica is going for the bright and radiant face provided by Avon Color Personal Match Liquid Foundations. She adds: "Blush should be iridescent and must avoid the nose and the forehead."

For eyeshadows, she recommends Avon Color True Color Eyeshadow Quad Touch of Spice, Lilac Dream and Denim.

"Eyeshadows in corals, gold, orange, green and pink are the perfect feel for summer," she says.

MAKEUP by Avon Color

To achieve the orange color this season, Avon Color offers the Sunshine Bliss Sunshine Pink and Peach Eyeshadow Duos.

On big bold eyes, Delica advises: "Big bold eyes with lashes that are dramatically enhanced with volumizing mascara are hits in runway shows abroad. It provides drama minus the fake look and the hassle of putting on fake eyelashes."

To achieve this look, she suggests Avon Color Daring Curves Mascara, which curls lashes upward to a weightless gravity-defying curve.

Bright lips are also in, like those provided by Avon Color Glimmersticks Lip Liner. As Delica notes: "The pencil should be the same color as the lipstick."

She is also advising women to learn to layer more with their makeup.

"They can add depth to cheeks and lips with two shades of the same color. Avoid having a chunk of one color by adding a lighter shade of the same color on top of your darker color."

Beauty and color are definitely at play as soon as Avon Color takes over the ramp on Philippine Fashion Week. Witness Avon Color's vision come to life on the country's beautiful models. Catch Philippine Fashion Week on March 23, at The Rockwell Tent.

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From ugly to attractive

Beverly Hills 6750's 'Ms. Ugly (No More)' search offers the chance to win a surgical aesthetic makeover worth P1 million

JESSICA Rodriguez-Bunevacz

PHOTOS BY AUGUST DELA CRUZ

DAVID Bunevacz, president and CEO of Beverly Hills 6750, and wife Jessica

By Amy I. Rañola

HAVING ANOTHER BAD HAIR DAY, FEELING like a tub of lard in a swimsuit, waking up already feeling like a whale—we've all had these unpretty times. But for some people, especially women, these times become a constant daily reminder of what they lack in aesthetics.

Has it been that way for you? Are you convinced that you're ugly? Do you wish you could alter parts of your face and body? Think you can write a book about it?

Pour your heart out on paper (well, an essay will do) and you might just get the chance to win a surgical aesthetic makeover worth P1 million.

Beverly Hills 6750, a new Makati-based surgical center specializing in plastic surgery, has launched the search for "Ms. Ugly (No More)," in partnership with the INQUIRER and Smart Communications. Ten finalists will have their photos and essays published in the INQUIRER, and via text votes, the public will decide who will be the lucky winner.

"Basically, the 'ugly' we're looking for is actually in sympathy with the person's perception of herself, not necessarily of the people or the world around her. She must believe that an enhancement of her physical looks via surgery will make a difference in her self-esteem and confidence, which diet and exercise can do nothing about," says David Bunevacz, president and CEO of Beverly Hills 6750.

An affiliate of the Beverly Hills Institute, a leading medical center that specializes in plastic surgery in Southern California, Beverly Hills 6750 opened its doors on November 2006. The clinic is its first branch outside the US.

The Ms. Ugly contest was inspired by a National Geographic episode where a medical team literally combed through every village in China in search of the ugliest person they could find—all shown on television. The local counterpart is a "The Swan"-meets-"American Idol" contest that promises to be different by not becoming another reality TV show.

"The concept may not sit well with Filipino values, so we put a different spin to it," Bunevacz says. "Through their essays, we will know whether it's just superficial vanity or an internal deficit they are missing. It has to be much more personal. There will also be a psychological evaluation for the finalists so we know that they are in a healthy state of mind."

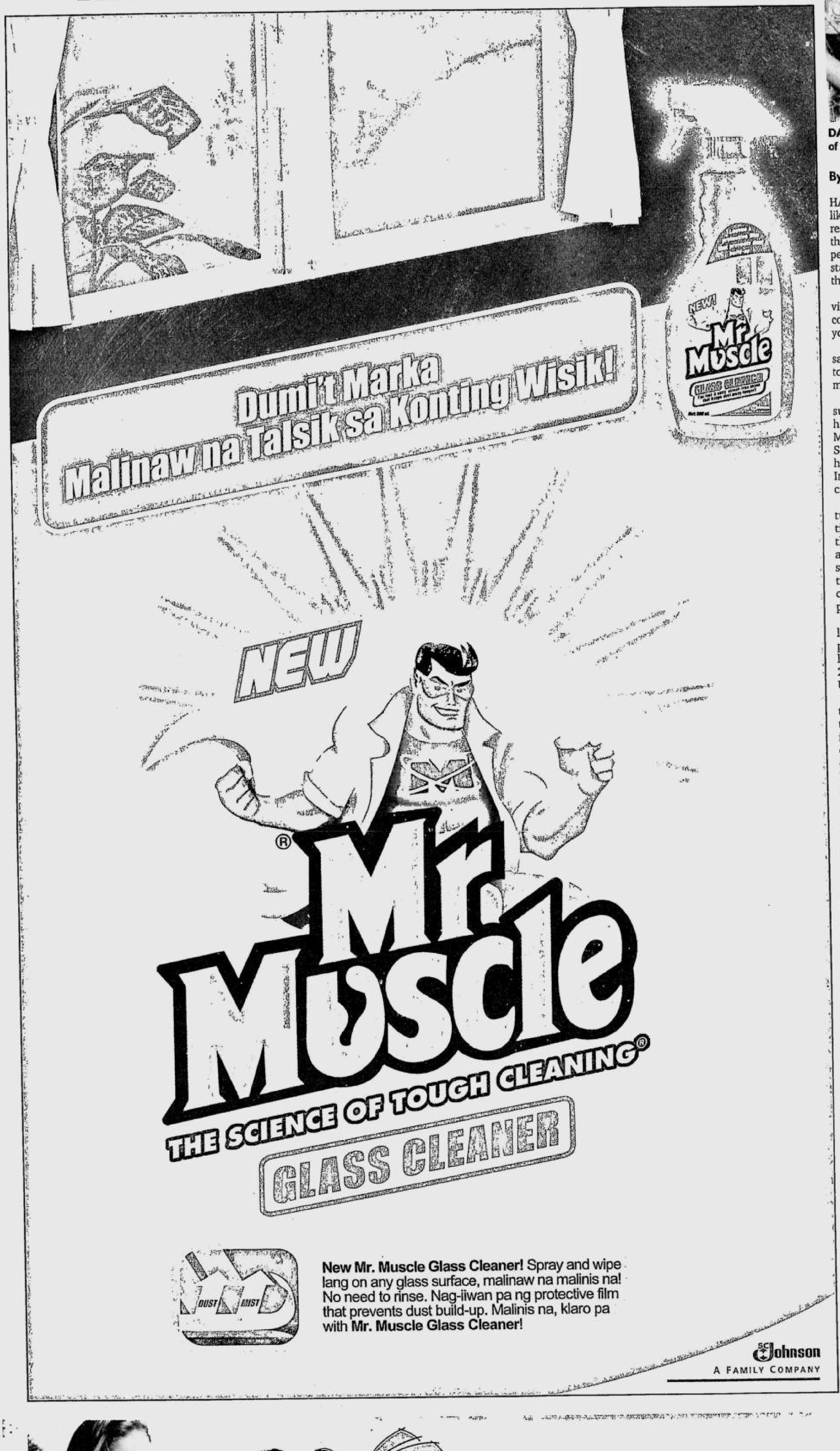
Three Ms. Ugly finalists will go under the knife but in the hands of a team of reputable plastic surgeons, dermatologists, dentists, and bariatric doctors to train for weight-loss management.

Among these experts are Dr. Rene Valerio, who has been practicing plastic surgery for over 20 years; medical director Dr. Eduardo Santos, also the chair of the section of surgical nutrition and metabolic support, department of surgery at St. Luke's Medical Center; Dr. Angela Cumagun, who has over 10 years' experience as an aesthetic dermatologist and is also an active staff member at Cardinal Santos Medical Center; and Dr. Don Apolonio Magadia, who has been in dental practice for the past 17 years and is one of only two Philippine-based Filipino dentists who are members of the Academy of Laser Dentistry, USA.

All prescribed procedures will be subject to the approval of the finalists.

Interested contestants may send their essays, along with close-up and full-body photos, to the Beverly Hills 6750 clinic. Twenty semifinalists will be chosen to proceed to a go-see, where they will be interviewed and assessed by the medical team. The text-voting will begin when the top 10 finalists' photos and essays are published in the INQUIRER.

Ms. Ugly candidates must be 21-35 years old; of good moral character; sound body and mind; at least 5'3" in height; must be a high-school graduate; and able to express herself well. To join, mail photos and essays to Beverly Hills 6750, 11/F, 6750 Ayala Ave., Makati City, or e-mail missugly@bh6750.com.ph. The search is until June 15.



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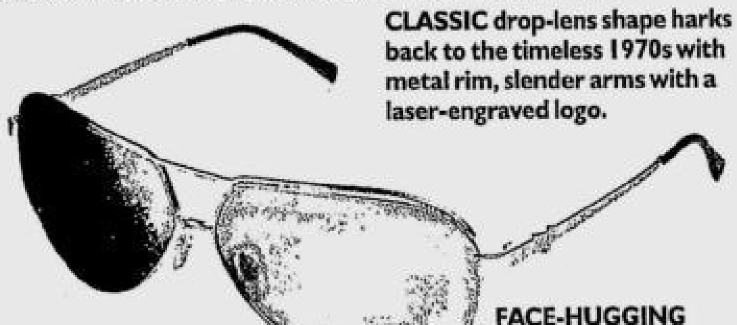

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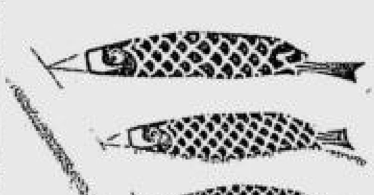

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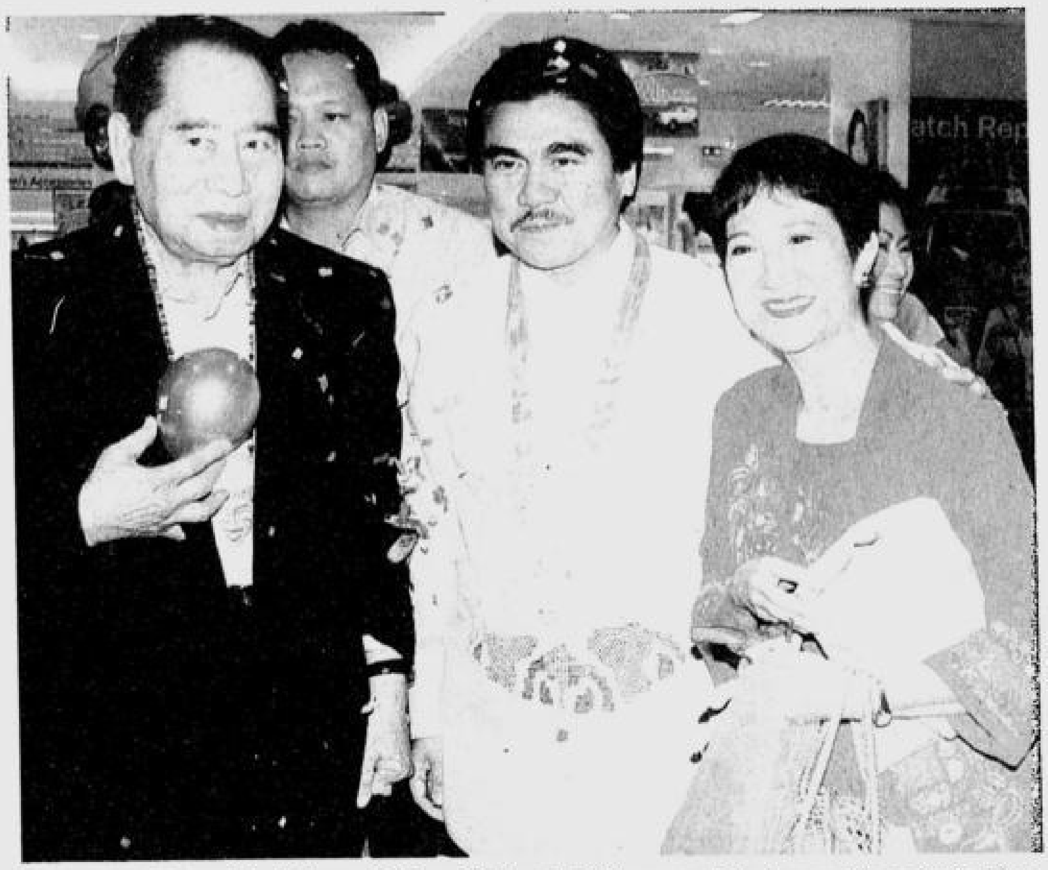
SM DEPARTMENT Store's image model Charlene Gonzales with Cebu City's First Lady Margot Osmeña

SM DEPARTMENT Store's image model Marc Nelson



SM FOUNDER and chair Henry Sy Sr. with Bacolod City mayor Bing Leonardia and wife, Elsa Fuentes L.

REP. MONICO Fuentebella and wife Paching

BACOLOD City's singer-composer José Mari Chan

FELICIDAD Sy officially opens the entrance to the 28th SM Supermall, SM City Bacolod.

Bacolod now has its own Mall of Asia

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

MY FAVORITE "CITY OF SMILES," Bacolod, now has its own fantastic version of the iconic Mall of Asia with the opening of the awesome SM City Bacolod in this bustling Western Visayan City.

When we drove there for the grand opening, roads toward it were practically filled with thousands of people from the city and neighboring towns rushing to see the new mall.

Before I arrived, the mall had been formally blessed, and the affair was attended by hotshot city officials such as Bacolod Mayor **Bing Leonardia**, Rep. **Monico Fuentebella**, and Vice Mayor **Renecito Novero**. Also present were Negros Occidental Gov. **Joseph Maranon** and Vice Governor **Isidro Zayco**. They were welcomed by SM officials led by the SM founder and chairman himself, **Henry Sy Sr.**, **Felicidad Sy**, SM Prime Holdings president **Hans Sy**, SM president **Tessie Sy-Coson**, and SM Supermarket SVP **Herbert Sy**, *palanggas*.

Other hot namedroppables present were Bishop **Vicente Navarra**, Iloilo City Mayor **Jerry Treñas**, Cebu City Mayor **Tommy Osmeña** and **Margot Osmeña**.

Welcoming mallers were singer-composer and southern gentleman **José Mari Chan**, SM Department Store endorsers **Marc Nelson** and **Charlene Gonzales**, young star **Iza Calzado**, and heartthrob **Dingdong Dantes**, *palanggas*.

The humongous edifice was brilliantly done by a design team that includes WV Coscolluella and Associate and Monolith Construction and Development Corp.

R. Joseph Holdings party

A thanksgiving mass and a super fun bash were held at the new Travel Lounge in Pasay City by R. Joseph Holdings Inc., the popular holding company of the fantastic Joseph brothers **Robert**, **Ralph**, **Ronnie** and **Raymond.**

It was as if the whole town came to be accounted for, from the corporate world to the diplomatic, airline and travel communities.

Excellent wines from the Joseph-owned Ralph's Wines and Spirits overflowed during the celebration. The superbly prepared sumptuous dinner consisted of *paella*, crispy *toro*, *callos*, *gambas* and other Spanish yummies specially prepared by **Johnny Midnight Joseph** (F&B director, Travel Lounge) and chef **Fernando Magaro**'s super-efficient team, dahlings.

For entertainment, the swinging Akafellas rocked the place, led by **Robi Joseph**, Bobby's son; TV personality **Melissa de Leon Joseph**, and the fab eight-piece Century string ensemble.

Robert Lim Joseph, hotshot chairman of R. Joseph Holdings, thanked the Joseph companies' partners and clients for the "fruitful relationship" over the years. R. Joseph Holdings includes Philippine Wine Merchants, Ralph's Wines and Spirits, Coltrans Group of Companies, Celebrity World Productions, Inc., Nuat Sen Corp./Tonton Multipurpose Cooperative and Century Cellar Corp.

Après Robert's short informal speech, it was time to booze up and really party, dahlings!

Party place on wheels

Hey, what's the coolest way to bring the hottest party to any place you want?

Well, *palanggas*, why not try the Maxim Bong Bus? It's a party vehicle like no other at the Rockwell Strip. Monstrous at 10 feet in height, 14 feet in length and six feet in width, plus devilishly hot with its bright red and midnight black exterior, this "lean, mean roving party machine" is capable of gathering the coolest people for the hottest bash imaginable, dahlings.

The bus was conceptualized by Proximity and refurbished by Almazora Motors. Since we got to feel it, ride it and party in it, Maxim Philippines' hotshot executive editor **Rovilson Fernandez** and **Gal Jaymee Joaquin** had us rocking with the bus' booming sound and video system, provided by Autozone. Pretty soon, Maxim's party bus will get that additional chic Mercedes touch, care of CATS Motors, *natch*.

The Mercedes Benz Luxury Cruiser is packed with all the ingredients needed for a smashing happening: a poker table, a state-of-the-art touch-screen sound system, a DJ's booth, a fully equipped bar, stripper poles, a comfort room and, most importantly, Maxim gals! No wonder it was such a hit on its first night out.

If that's not enough, you can even borrow this baby for whatever occasion or non-occasion. E-mail marketing@maximphilippines.ph or call 4152765. For a nominal fee, you can let the Bong Bus give you the perfect party with the use of the bus and all its amenities.

Yes! You're definitely in for a wild, wild ride with Maxim's Bong Bus, *palanggas*. And remember, "What happens in the bus, stays in the bus." *N'est ce pas*! (as in, *di bala*!)

CitiGold fetes clients

Citibank Philippines threw a grand welcome for clients of CitiGold, the bank's wealth management banking service in the country, *palanggas*.

Over 400 guests attended the *tres* exclusive happening at Makati Shangri-La Hotel. They were welcomed by retail banking director **Michellina Triwardhany** and CitiGold wealth management director **Judith Go**.

The customer appreciation event was preceded by a 2007 Market Outlook briefing, featuring speakers from Citibank Asia Pacific, Citigroup Phils. and ING Phils. The speakers gave the audience an overview of what to expect from regional and global markets in 2007.

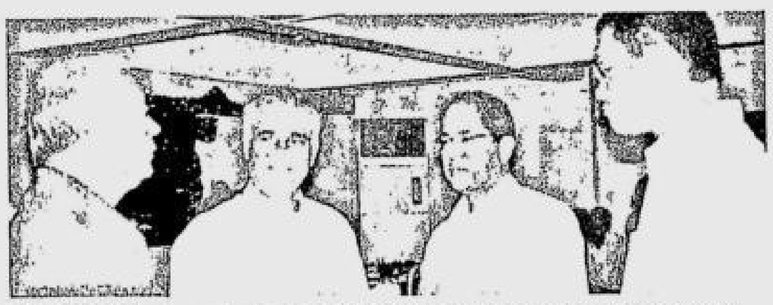
Rene and **Baby de Luna**, and **George Chua**, CitiGold clients for over a decade, thanked Citibank for its comprehensive reporting of the market situation around the globe.

Après the investment briefing, Citibank treated its guests to a *tres* special five-course dinner and raffled off prizes, including cellular phones, top-of-the-line luggage and air miles, which winners can redeem for trips to choice destinations. So Citibank, *di bala*, *palanggas?*

POPULAR Joseph brothers Ralph, Raymund and Ronnie

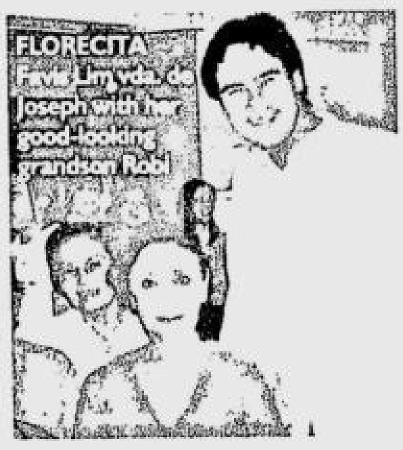
FORMER SBMA chair Felicito Payumo, lawyer Tito Gupit, Ida Joseph and Ben Santos

HAMAD Albarrak of the Embassy of Kuwait; Jaime Zembrano, district sales manager of Kuwait Airways; Deedee Mallari, president of Coltrans Group; and Robert "Bobby" Hukom, country manager of the popular Gulf Air



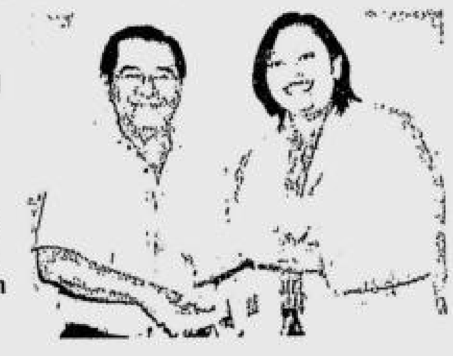
ROBERT Lim Joseph, chair of RJ Holdings; Consul General Fausto R. Preysler (Costa Rica); Benny Laguesma, incoming Rotary Club of Manila president; and Sixto Benedicto, VP of Benedicto Steel Corp.

CARLOS Palanca III of Diageo talking with Ralph Joseph



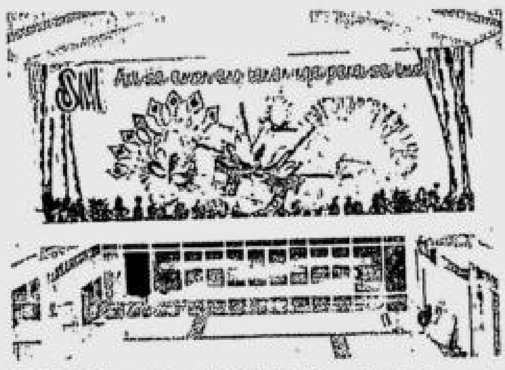
FLORECITA Favis Lim vda. de Joseph with her good-looking grandson Robi

JUDITH Go (second from right) with Cesar Zulueta, Concep Cruz, Yeye Choa and Nicole Dayrit

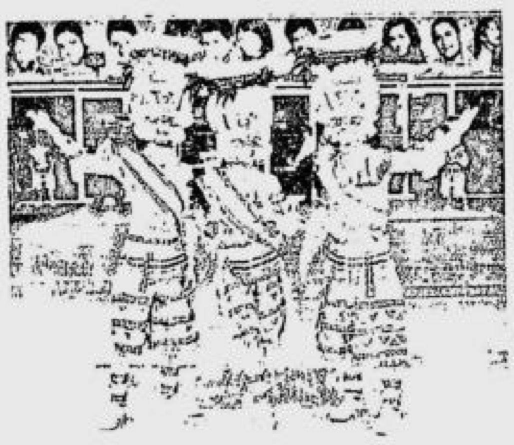


CITIBANK Phils.' Michellina Triwardhany presents raffle winner Benny Gutierrez with 100,000 Krisflyer Miles.

RINA Azcuna with Maxim art director Alvi Siongco and Ernie Lopez



MALL'S interiors highlight Bacolod's famous Maskarra Festival, designed by Fritz Ynfante



MASKARRA dancers welcome shoppers to SM City Bacolod.

ANGELICA Lopez, Rovilson Fernandez, Shawn Yao

BUTCH San Agustin of ABS-CBN Interactive and Pierre Calasanz, Maxim managing director

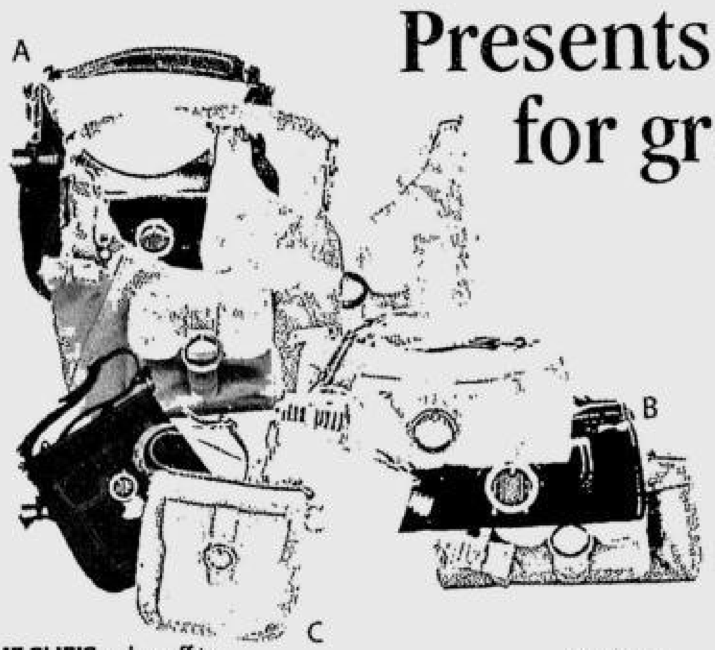
JOHNNIE WALKER

SHEREE and Rashel Piazza

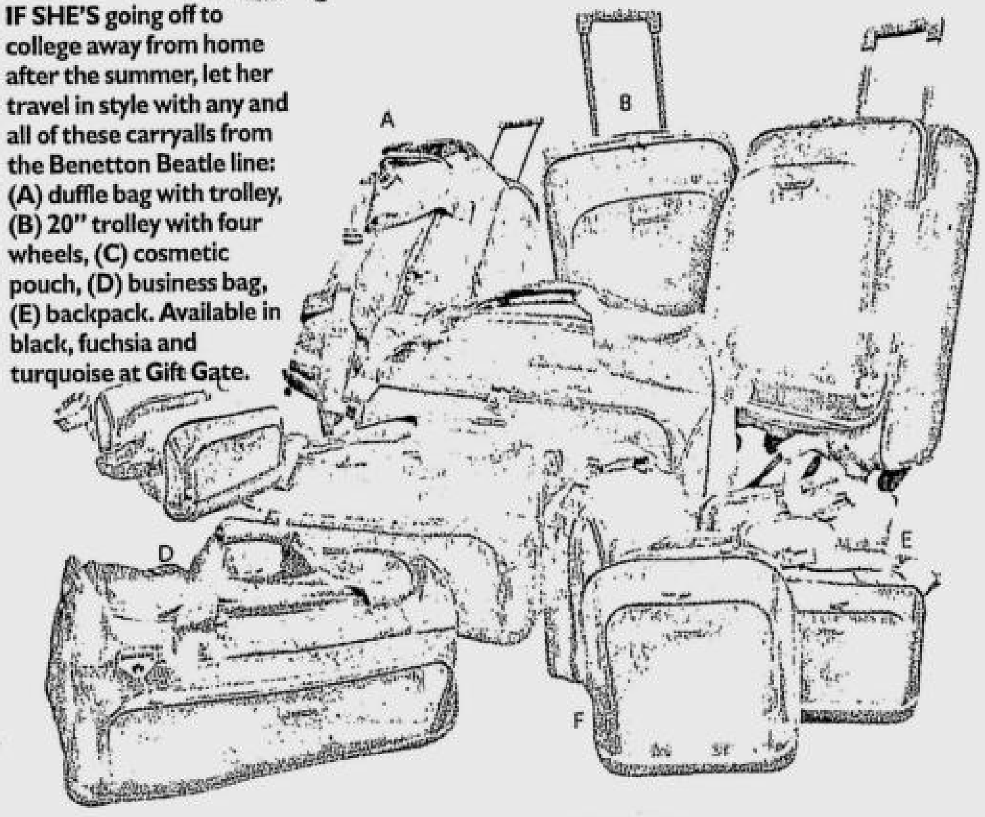
APA Ongpin of Philweb, Andros Villaraza of CATS Motors and Rene de Guzman, Maxim brand manager

MIGUEL Vargas, Malou Lacson and husband Paolo Pineda of ABS-CBN Interactive

Presents perfect for graduates



IF JOB-HUNTING is on top of her schedule after graduation, give her a good, roomy bag that can go with any outfit. Benetton's Muse collection comes in (A) hobo bag, (B) small handbag or (C) flat sling bag, in white, lime and black. Available at Gift Gate in all major malls.



IF SHE'S going off to college away from home after the summer, let her travel in style with any and all of these carryalls from the Benetton Beatle line: (A) duffle bag with trolley, (B) 20" trolley with four wheels, (C) cosmetic pouch, (D) business bag, (E) backpack. Available in black, fuchsia and turquoise at Gift Gate.

going for the flair!

OTTO

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GOINGS ON

Search for amateur youth bands

GLOBE KANTABATAAN, THE COUNTRY'S biggest youth music festival, returns this year to search for amateur youth bands nationwide. Grand Star Dreamer Yeng Constantino is this year's endorser. The top five finalists will compete live on national television and have their songs aired over the radio during the contest period. Winners get a chance to train at the Kantabataan Musicademy in Manila, star in their own music video, get a makeover from Penshoppe, own Nokia 5300 XpressMusic phones, and win cash prizes. Up to P1M in cash prizes and surprises will be given away. Deadline for submission on entries is on or before May 20 at any Globe Telecom Business Centers or kantabataan@globetel.com.ph. The competition is open to existing Globe and Touch mobile subscribers. Entry forms can be downloaded from the Globe Kantabataan website, www.kantabataan.com.ph. Text KANTA to 2346 for free or log on to www.kantabataan.com.ph.

LECTURE. The Philippine College for the Advancement in Medicine (PCAM) will hold a free lecture on March 27, 5 p.m., at the Manila Polo Club on alternative medical procedures that reportedly result in 70-percent survival rate for Stage 4 and terminal cancer patients. Lecturer Dr. Xu Kecheng is president of Fuda Cancer Hospital in Guangzhou, China. Xu and his team use cryosurgery, an alternative to conventional surgery; photodynamic therapy, an alternative to radiation; and immunotherapy, an alternative to chemotherapy. The procedures were reportedly safer and less costly than conventional methods. The first 150 participants get free admission. The lecture starts at 6:30 p.m. A lecture in Mandarin will be given on March 25, 3 p.m., at the Liberty Hall, Benavides Street, Binondo, Manila under the auspices of the Filipino-Chinese Cultural & Economic Association (0917-8333828).

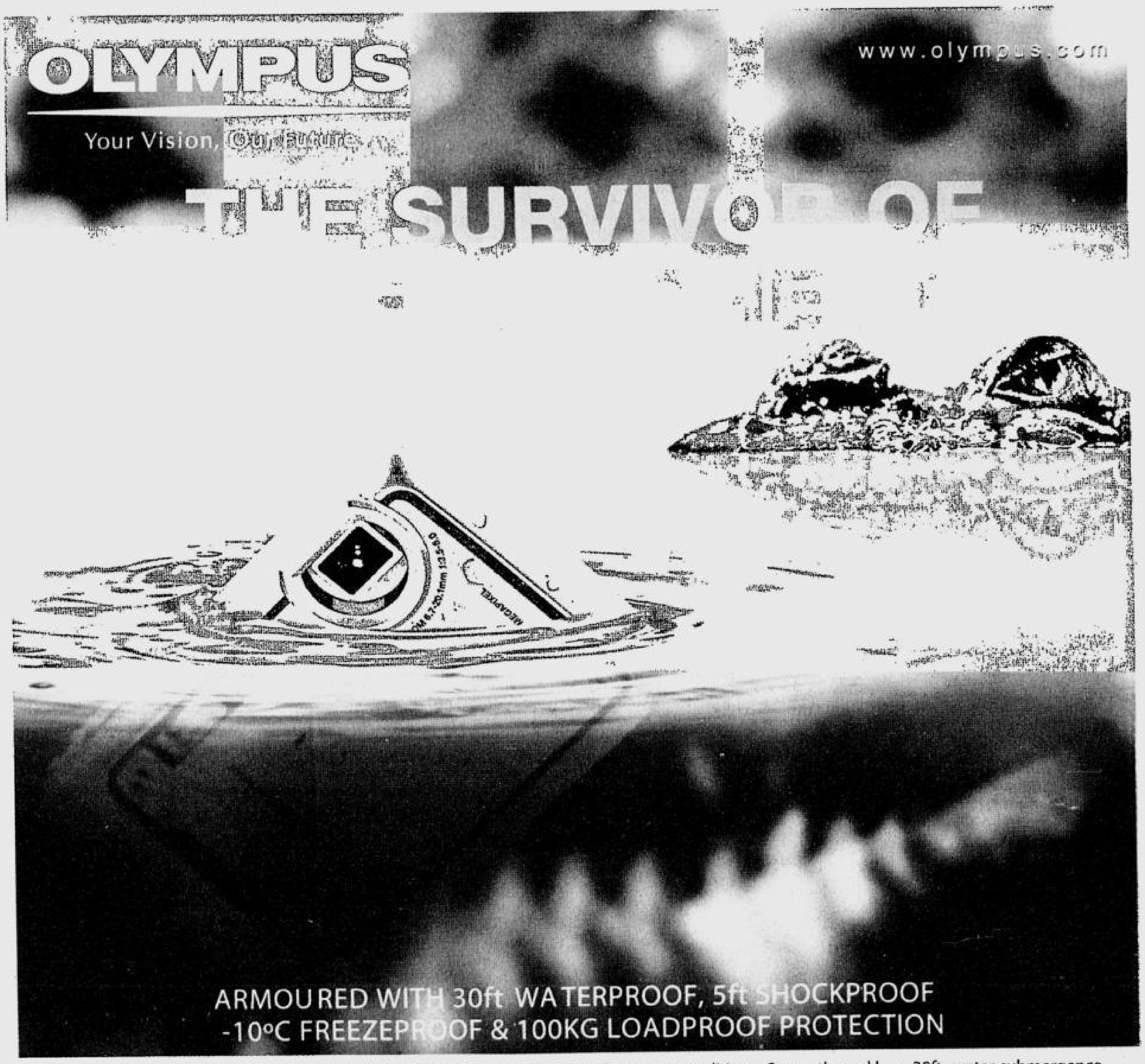
FASHION WEEK. The Guess? Jeans Spring Summer 2007 formally opens the Philippine Fashion Week for Retail Brands at 6 p.m., March 28, at the Glorietta Activity Center, Ayala Center, Makati City. For women, the collection, as always, is fiery and passionate, inspired by those who are aware of the power they possess.

TRAVEL LINE JEWELRY. Christine Dayrit, chair of the Cinema Evaluation Board and a travel writer, presents "My Rendezvous, The Travel Line of Miladay" on March 29, 5 p.m., at the Miladay store in SM Mall of Asia. The Rendezvous Line consists of sparkling pieces of jewelry inspired by Dayrit's travels and love for movies.

A highlight is the Surabaya Collection, pieces that depict the allure and mysticism of East Java, Indonesia. Guests during the launch will have the chance to win prizes, including a business-class trip for two to Surabaya, Indonesia, with five-star hotel accommodation. Miladay (tel. 8964617, 8968214, 8907738; www.miladayjewels.com)

BIKE TOUR. The 9th Tour of Fireflies' (TOF) Cycle for Clean Environment will start at Tiendesitas on April 15 at 7 a.m. The 50-km bike tour for clean air will go through the cities of Pasig, Taguig, Makati, Pasay, Manila and Quezon City. Great photo opportunities along Ayala Avenue, Roxas Boulevard, Quirino Grandstand and Welcome rotunda. Registration fee is P50. Additional P150 for a TOF t-shirt or P300 for a jersey.

Participants should bring their bike helmets and are encouraged to don colorful, environment-themed costumes. Registration starts March 22. Log on to www.fireflybrigade.org for details. There will be a two-day on-site registration at Tiendesitas on April 14, 1-6 p.m., and April 15, TOF day, 5 a.m.-7 a.m. The TOF is co-sponsored by the DENR and the INQUIRER.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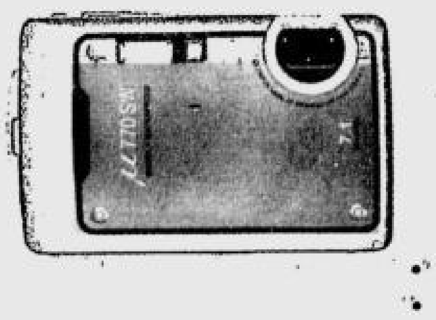

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- 3X Optical Zoom
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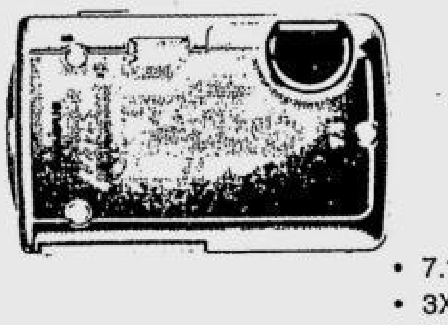
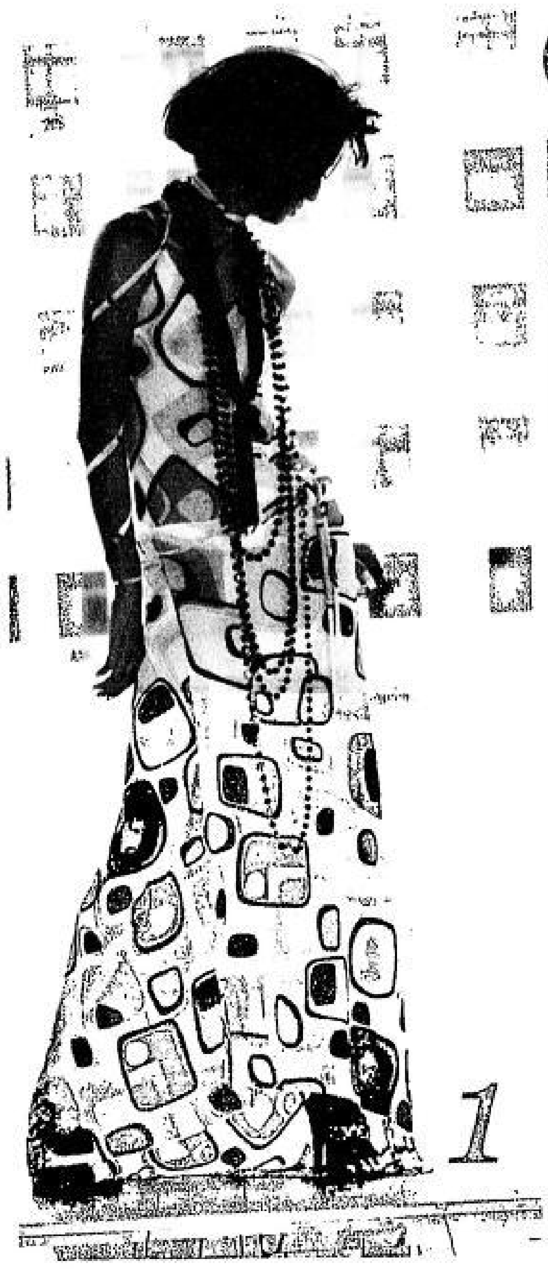


- 7.1 Megapixels
- 3X Optical Zoom
- 15ft Waterproof and 5ft Shockproof

Colors of summer

FASHION DESIGNER Eddie Baddeo pitches for the coolest of colors and unembellished gowns that evoke Grecian maidens as party wear for this season in the sun. Hot shades of soft fabrics draped showgirl-style, as well as bright, bold graphics are also in his summer collection, which will be presented on March 28 in The Island at The Fort.



1 **BOLD** graphic prints played up with neckline straps

2 **WINE-RED** Venus gown

3 **DRAMATIC** draping makes these column gowns in peach-orange and deep purple hot party wear.

4 **GRECIAN.** Ice blue and olive-green wraparound top and geometric hemline

FASHION AND ACCESSORIES:
EDDIE BADDEO
MODELS: JENG CUYUGAN
AND CHARISSE OCRISMA
PHOTOS: EDWARD
DE LA CRUESTA
IMAGE STYLING:
ERIC MANINGAT
OF STUDIO 546
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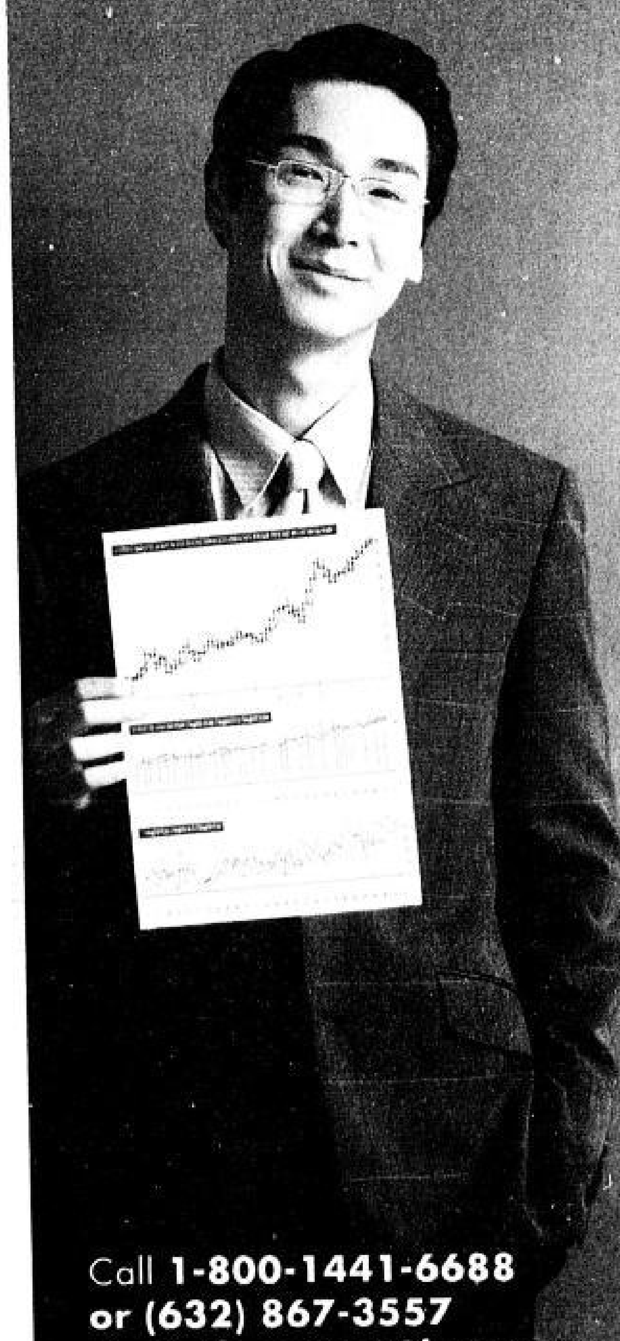

Mirror, mirror on the wall
Broken pieces on the floor
Is there any way for me
To shine in beauty
And enjoy life's opportunities

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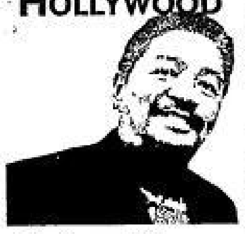
Editor Emmie G. Velarde

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) or email us at pr_entertainment@inquir net/entertainment

"I JUST felt the dress was very feminine and very Jessica Rabbit," Isla Fisher said of the Oscar gown designed for her by Cebu-born Monique Lhuillier.

Borat's gal wears Lhuillier; Clapton leaves us hanging

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD



Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—BEING THE *TINOLANG manok*-eating Pinoy that I am, my instinct upon meeting **Isla Fisher**, the actress-girlfriend of **Sacha Baron Cohen** (Borat), was to pronounce her name as in "Isla Puting Bato."

But the pretty redhead—the virgin who turned sexually ravenous in the comedy hit "Wedding Crashers"—clarified: "It is pronounced Eye-la. I was named after the island of Islay, a small island off Scotland where they make whiskey. My parents are both Scottish and both love whiskey."

At this press con, I asked Isla about her decision to wear a gown by Filipino-American designer **Monique Lhuillier** at the recent Oscars. "I just felt the dress was very feminine and very Jessica Rabbit," replied the Australia-raised actress. Indeed, Isla's décolletage-revealing emerald green satin gown made the hearts of all Roger Rabbits thump.

At this session, she wore a plaid vest over a long-sleeved blue shirt, jeans and gold-hued shoes.

Of course, we all wanted to hear what it's like being the fiancée of the comic genius. But when a colleague started the ball rolling, the ball stopped right there. "I don't talk about my personal life," she declared with the sweetest smile. "I'm sorry." But when their height difference was brought up—Sacha towers at 6' 3" while she's a petite 5' 2"—Isla did say, "That doesn't generally keep people apart."

She claimed they were not often recognized in public. "We've been pretty fortunate in that area (staying private) so far," she said. Sacha introduced us to Isla at a party late last year. When we met them again at one of the Golden Globe afterparties, it was obvious the Cambridge alumnus and Globe winner for Best Actor-Comedy, was proud of his girl.

Sacha introduced us to Isla at a party last year. It was obvious the Globe winner was extremely proud of this girl

Asked if her association with Sacha, whose "Borat" movie is a huge success, has boosted her career, Isla was emphatic: "We're pretty separate in our professional lives." Meanwhile, on the personal level, she has converted to Judaism prior to wedding Sacha, who is Jewish.

Enthusiastic reviews

In her latest film "The Lookout," one of the first movies in 2007 to get enthusiastic reviews, Isla plays a stripper. The story was written by **Scott Frank**, whose credits include the acclaimed "Out of Sight," "Minority Report" and "Get Shorty." Scott also directs for the first time.

The heist drama-thriller is about bank janitor Chris Pratt (**Joseph Gordon-Levitt**), a high school golden boy until an accident left him with a brain trauma; an ex-con (**Matthew Goode**) and his dancer babe (Fisher) who try to recruit Chris as their robbery accomplice.

I told Isla that Luvlee Lemons, her name in "The Lookout," establishes her stripper character right away. "It's a very interesting name," she agreed. "A male-fantasy name, essentially." Isla and her co-stars deliver fine performances. Joseph, the child actor in the sitcom "3rd Rock from the Sun," has grown to become a terrific actor. Matthew Goode, **Scarlett Johansson**'s fiancé in **Woody Allen**'s "Matchpoint," **Jeff Daniels**, as Joseph's blind roommate and mentor, and **Carla Gugino** round up the cast.

When tossed one of those hypothetical questions, "Would she make a good stripper in real life?," the actress replied, "A lot of people say that actresses are like prostitutes. But they probably get rejected a lot less." Amid the ensuing laughter, I understood why this woman had captivated Sacha.

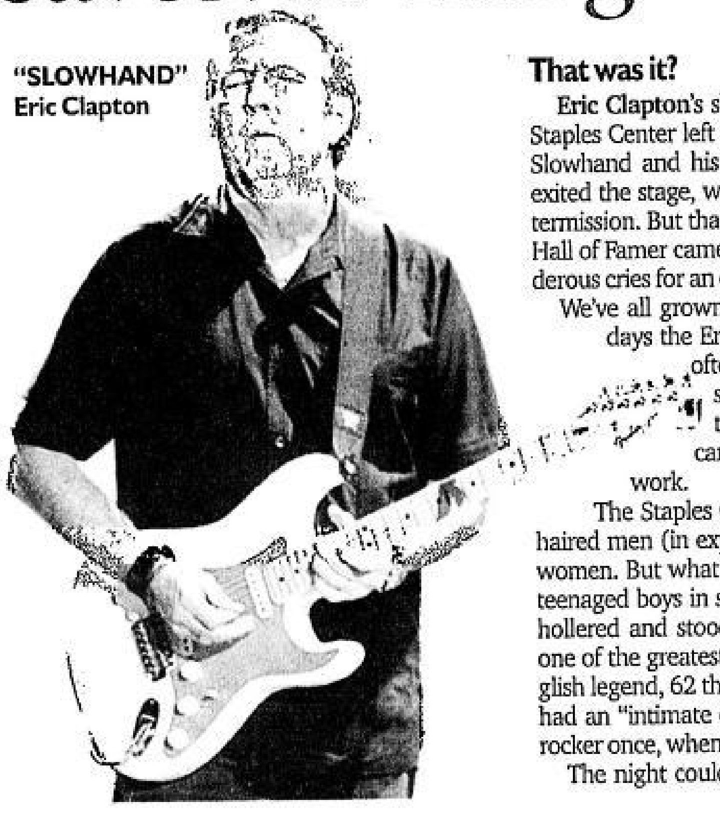
When the laughter died down, Isla added, "I didn't feel like Luvlee ... it was the opposite. The less I relate to a character, the more I enjoy inhabiting her emotional landscape."

So who is this girl who charmed Sacha? "Who am I?" she asked back with a smile. "My sensibility definitely is Australian. I'm definitely attracted to other Australians. I have a laid-back attitude that I feel is very Australian. I love a good barbee. I grew up with my brothers in the Middle East. After Oman, we were in Iran and Brunei, then England for a year. Then we moved to Australia. My father worked for the World Bank, the UN ..."

She joins a long list of actors whose frequent new-kid-in-school status sparked acting urges: "That's part of why comedy has always been attractive to me. I had to make friends quickly—the way to do that was to make them laugh."

And how did she get from Oman, her birthplace, to Australia and then Hollywood? "There's a whole lot in the middle," clarified the actress. "I left Australia after three years on the series to study [performing as a] clown, in Paris—at Jacques Lecoq, a theater school where **Geoffrey Rush** and **Emma Thompson** went. In England, I did a lot of rep theater. It was a great time."

She went on: "From there, I was cast in London to appear in 'Scooby Doo.' I shot for six months in Australia and came out to LA for the premiere. I got myself (a talent agent) and embarked on my American adventure."



"SLOWHAND" Eric Clapton

That was it?

Eric Clapton's short set last week at the Staples Center left us "*bitin na bitin*." When Slowhand and his terrific fellow musicians exited the stage, we hoped it was just an intermission. But that was it. The Rock and Roll Hall of Famer came back only after long, thunderous cries for an encore.

We've all grown, uh, mature with Eric. These days the Eric Clapton tune we hear more often is "Signe," played on smooth jazz stations. Even on this "light" track, any listener can appreciate his splendid guitar work.

The Staples Center was packed with silver-haired men (in expensive jackets and shoes) and women. But what made us smile was a group of teenaged boys in shorts behind us, who cheered, hollered and stood up repeatedly in ovation for one of the greatest guitarists of all time. (The English legend, 62 this month, was rumored to have had an "intimate encounter" with a local female rocker once, when he performed in Manila.)

The night could have gone on and on as Eric played with two brilliant guitarists, left-handed **Doyle Bramhall II** and pony-tailed **Derek Trucks**. I am sure not a few fans were waiting to hear "Lay Down Sally," "Tears in Heaven" or "Change the World," but they had no such luck. The guitar god did "Wonderful Tonight" and "Layla," though.

He hardly spoke beyond, "Thank you!" He didn't introduce the band, either. But since he turned over the spotlight to the musicians several times during the show, introductions would have been superfluous. Still, it would have been nice to hear the man speak.

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.

SHANG CINEPLEX

① PREMONITION
MTRCB PG-13
12:05, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

② 300
MTRCB: R-13
1:30, 4 20, 7:10, 10:00

③ NORBIT
MTRCB PG-13
12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

④ BECAUSE I SAID SO
MTRCB PG-13
1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7 50, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
TURISTAS MTRCB R-13
12 40, 3 00, 5 20, 7:40, 10 00

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special

In celebration of Women's Month Shangri-La Plaza presents concert-pianist Ingrid Sala Santamaria with the Peace Philharmonic Philippines String Quartet on March 24 (Sat.) at 7pm and ballerina par excellence Lisa Macuja with Ballet Manila on March 31 (Sat.) at 6:30 pm at the Grand Atrium, Level 2
Don't miss these great performances!

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Rapunzel
Happily N'Ever After

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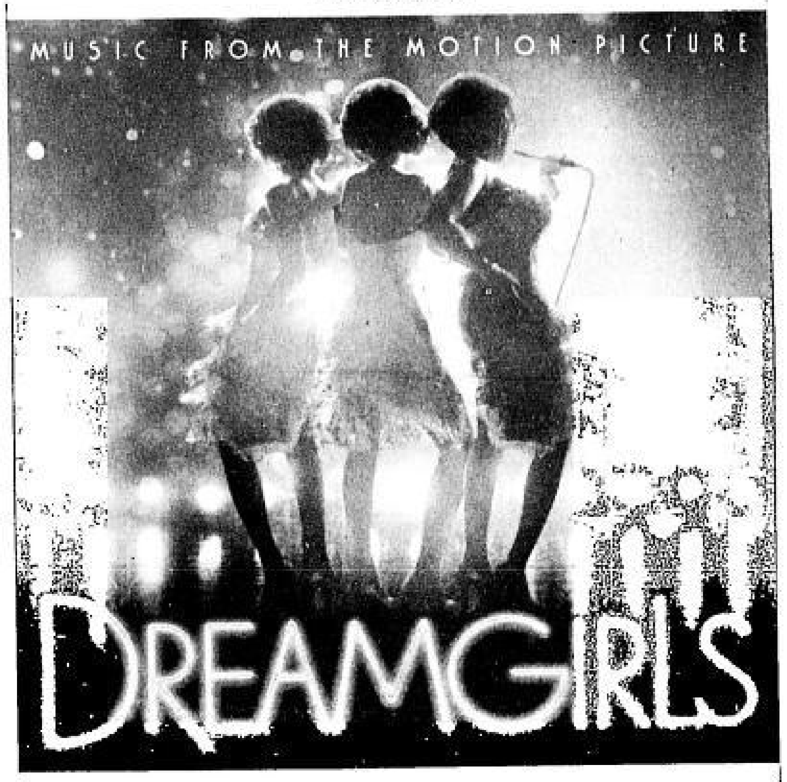
"Gusto kong maka-duet si Beyoncé."



MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE
DREAMGIRLS

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	TITLE	ARTIST	RINGBACK CODE	RINGTONE KEYWORD
1	Dreamgirls	Dreamgirls	SB074	DGIRLS
2	And I Am Telling You, I'm Not Going	Jennifer Hudson	SB076	NOTGOING
3	One Night Only	Jennifer Hudson	SB077	1NIGHT
4	One Night Only (Disco)	Dreamgirls	SB078	1NIGHT
5	Cadillac Car	Dreamgirls	SB092	CAD
6	Fake Your Way To The Top	Dreamgirls	SB093	FAKE
7	Family	Dreamgirls	SB094	FAMILY
8	It's All Over	Dreamgirls	SB098	ALLOVER
9	I Want You Baby	Dreamgirls	SB099	IWANTU
10	Move	Dreamgirls	SB100	MOVE
11	I Am Changing	Jennifer Hudson	SB096	
12	I Meant You No Harm	Eddie Murphy	SB097	
13	When I First Saw You	Jamie Foxx	SB101	IFIRST
14	When I First Saw You (Duet)	JFoxx/Dreamgirls	SB102	IFIRSTDUET
15	Hard to Say Goodbye	Dreamgirls	SB095	
16	Dreamgirls (Finale)	Dreamgirls	SB075	DGIRLS

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Authentic stars never give up

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

MOST MOVIES TOPBILL TRIED-and-tested stellar combinations because producers want to hedge their bets at the box office.

Every once in a long while, however, movie studios come across a relatively new talent who they believe is gifted and charismatic enough to "carry" a film and attract enough viewers to turn it into a hit.

That's a tall order, but some talents have been able to pull it off, launching long and productive careers, some of which have yet to run their course.

Sharon Cuneta in "Dear Heart," **Aga Muhlach** in "Bagets," **Fernando Poe, Jr.** in "Anak ni Palaris," **Susan Roces** in "Boksingera," **Dolphy and Lolita Rodriguez** in "Jack and Jill," **Snooky Serna and Richard Gomez** in "Blusang Itim," **Gloria Diaz** in "Ang Pinakamagandang Hayop sa Balat ng Lupa," **Elizabeth Oropesa** in "Mister Mo, Lover Boy Ko"—the list of popular new stars or stellar combinations is long and distinguished.

On the *other* hand, there are the talents who don't quite make the grade, whose stellar presence doesn't match their producers' expectations.

In some instances, their failure to shine is not really their fault. It can be attributed to a bad script, inept production, excessively heavy competition from established stars in bigger movies, etc.

Whatever the reason, stardom eludes the new leads, and they are rapped for their "presumption." Some lick their wounds and are able to make it in other vehicles, but most failures lose heart and give up.

We trust that other new talents are made of more sterling stuff, and decide to fight for their place in the show biz sun. They can take heart by recalling the experience of **Phillip Salvador**, who languished in dim supporting roles in action flicks until **Lino Brocka** transformed him into a dramatic actor.

Gloria Romero herself started out as an extra and remained in obscurity in another movie studio, before Sampaguita Pictures' starmaker, **Doc Perez**, saw her stellar potential and gave her increasingly bigger roles, until she attained the stardom that has continued to be hers for more than 50 years.

What about *the* **Nora Aunor**? She too played mainly supporting roles when she started making movies, and it was only when her love team with **Tirso Cruz III** caught fire that she became the country's first superstar.

In the field of music, both **Rico J. Puno** and **Ogie Alcasid** paid their dues for years in obscure dives before they stumbled, wide-eyed and bushy-tailed, into the stellar sunlight. On the distaff side, **Regine Velasquez** went the rounds of small singing contests before she too attained singing-TV-film stardom.

What do these resilient performers have in common? They never gave up! Even when the going was rough, they kept their eyes on the stellar prize.

And, as they struggled and suffered, they kept on learning and honing their skills, so when stardom finally deigned to smile on them, they were good and ready!

'How I Met Your Mother'

The new sitcom, "How I Met Your Mother," premieres on the Etc. channel this month, every Monday at 8:30 p.m. The show revolves around Ted (**Josh Radnor**) and his quest for love. He eventually finds what he's looking for in Robin (**Cobie Smulders**)—but then again, destiny may have something else in store for him. Other lead players include **Alysson Hannigan, Neil Patrick Harris** and **Jason Segal.**

'300' tops box office

The epic action-adventure production "300" is a hit not only in the States, but also in the Philippines, where it grossed more than P36 million from March 7 to 11. The fest is deemed very impressive, since "300" carried a restricted R-13 classification.

Directed by **Zack Snyder**, "300" stars **Gerald Butler, Lena Headey** and **Dominic West.** It is a ferocious retelling of the ancient Battle of Thermopylae in which King Leonidas (Butler) and 300 Spartans fought to the death against Xerxes and his massive Persian army.

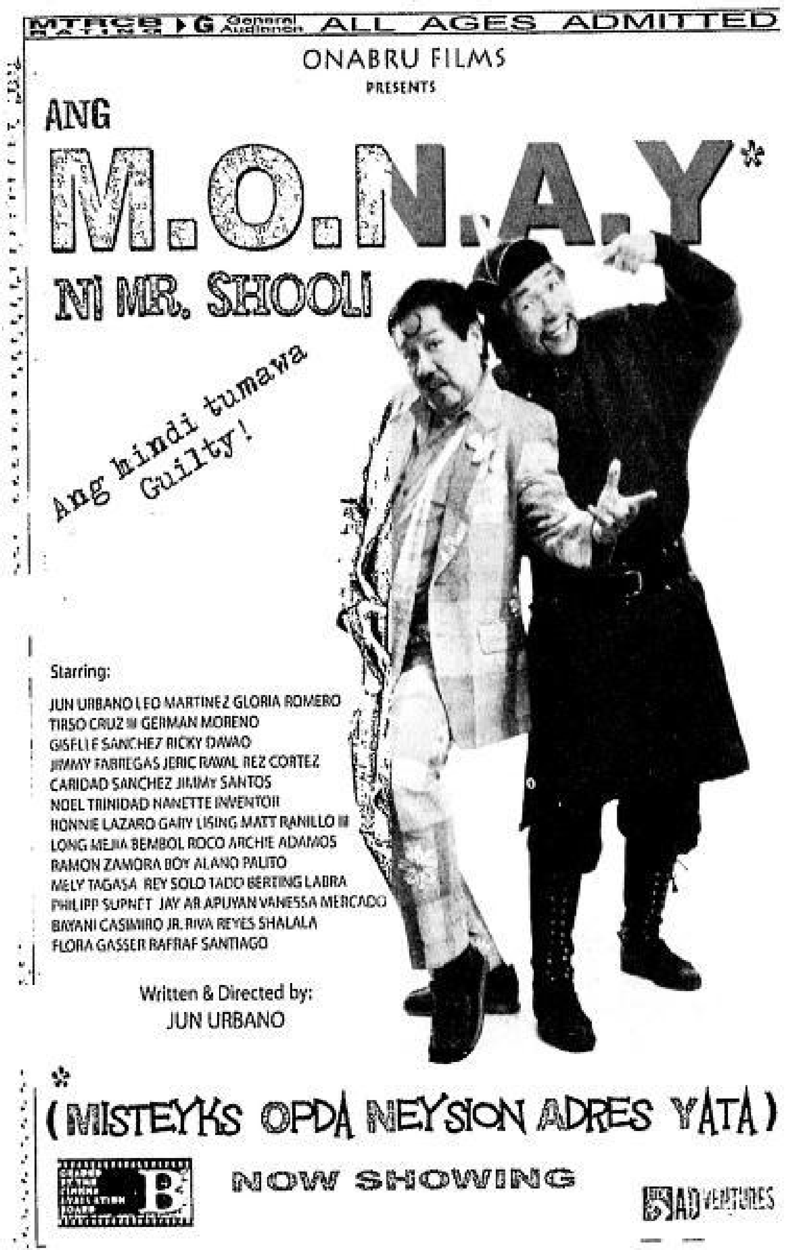
Star Awards tonight

DID YOU KNOW...

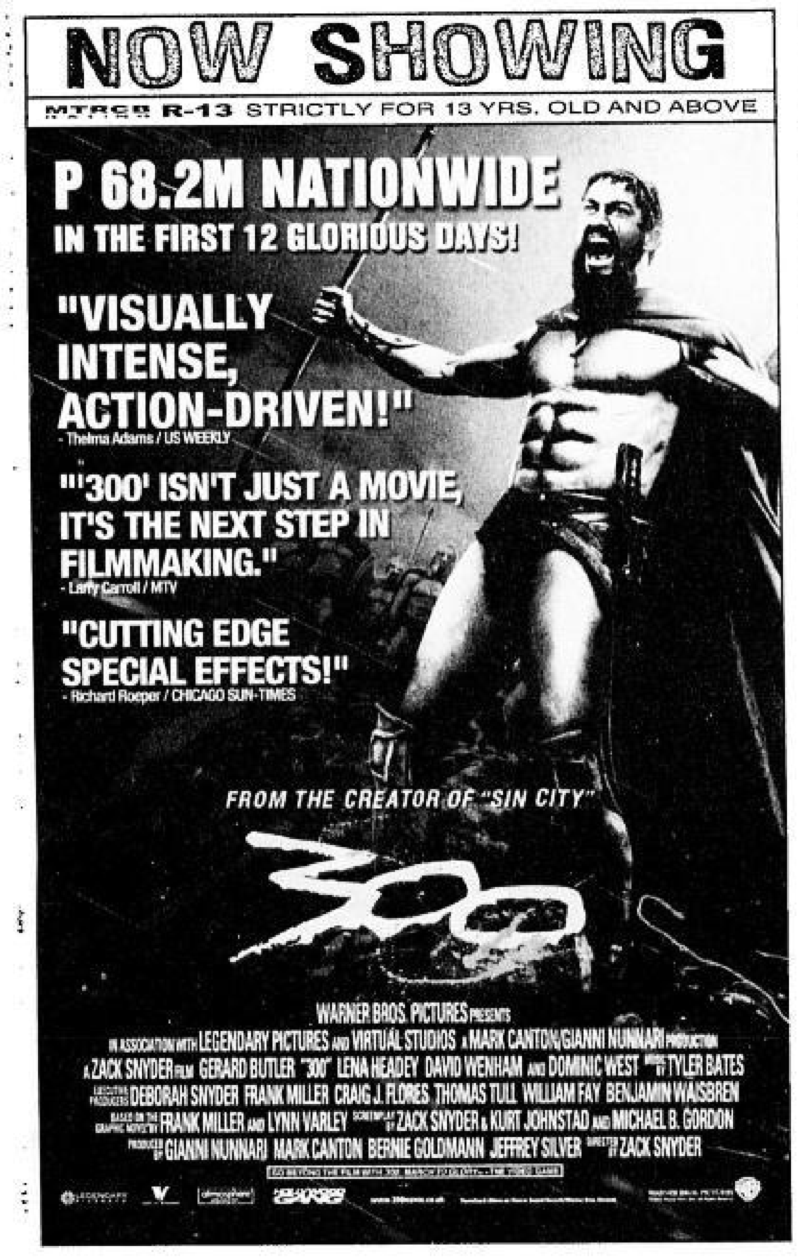
THE 23rd STAR AWARDS for Movies will be staged tonight at the UP Theater, with the theme "A Night of Winners, A Night of Champions, A Night of Triumph."

It will be telecast the following day on IBC 13 at 10 p.m.

Produced by Starview Production under the direction of Arlene Tolibas, the event will be hosted by Heart Evangelista, Jericho Rosales, Dingdong Dantes, Izza Calzado and Ryan Agoncillo. Among the performers are Jed Madela, Frenchie Dy, Gerald Santos, Acielle Santos, Lovi Poe, Ogie Alcasid, Ai-Ai delas and Jaya.



MTRCB RATING G General Audience ALL AGES ADMITTED
ONABRU FILMS
PRESENTS
ANG M.O.N.A.Y* NI MR. SHOOLI
Ang hindi tumawa Guilty!
Starring:
JUN URBANO LEO MARTINEZ GLORIA ROMERO
TIRSO CRUZ III GERMAN MORENO
GISELLE SANCHEZ RICKY DAVAO
JIMMY FABREGAS JERIC RAVAL REZ CORTEZ
CARIDAD SANCHEZ JIMMY SANTOS
NOEL TRINIDAD NANETTE INVENTOR
RONNIE LAZARO GARY LISING MATT RANILLO III
LONG MEJIA BEMBOL ROCO ARCHIE ADAMOS
RAMON ZAMORA BOY ALANO PALITO
MELY TAGASA REY SOLO TADO BERTING LABRA
PHILIPP SUPNET JAY AR APUYAN VANESSA MERCADO
BAYANI CASIMIRO JR. RIVA REYES SHALALA
FLORA GASSER RAFRAF SANTIAGO
Written & Directed by:
JUN URBANO
*(MISTEYKS OPDA NEYSION ADRES YATA)
B
NOW SHOWING
ADVENTURES



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"VISUALLY INTENSE, ACTION-DRIVEN!" - Thelma Adams / US WEEKLY
"'300' ISN'T JUST A MOVIE, IT'S THE NEXT STEP IN FILMMAKING." - Larry Carroll / MTV
"CUTTING EDGE SPECIAL EFFECTS!" - Richard Roeper / CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
FROM THE CREATOR OF "SIN CITY"
300
WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENTS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH LEGENDARY PICTURES AND VIRTUAL STUDIOS A MARK CANTON/GIANNI NUNNARI PRODUCTION
A ZACK SNYDER FILM GERARD BUTLER "300" LENA HEADEY DAVID WENHAM AND DOMINIC WEST MUSIC BY TYLER BATES
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DEBORAH SNYDER FRANK MILLER CRAIG J. FLORES THOMAS TULL WILLIAM FAY BENJAMIN WAISBREN
BASED ON THE GRAPHIC NOVEL BY FRANK MILLER AND LYNN VARLEY SCREENPLAY BY ZACK SNYDER & KURT JOHNSTAD AND MICHAEL B. GORDON
PRODUCED BY GIANNI NUNNARI MARK CANTON BERNIE GOLDMANN JEFFREY SILVER DIRECTED BY ZACK SNYDER

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CINEMA 1 TURISTAS 10:30, 12:50, 3:10 5:30, 7:50, 10:10 R-13
CINEMA 2 ALPHA DOG 11:45, 2:25, 5:05 7:45, 10:30 R-13
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NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 PREMONITION 11:45, 2:25, 5:05 7:45, 10:30 PG-13
CINEMA 4 300 1:45, 4:30, 7:15 10:00 R-13
CINEMA 5 NORBIT 10:20, 12:10, 2:45 5:20, 7:55, 10:30 PG-13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.
MUSIC MUSEUM
March 23, 2007 | SITTI... IN LOVE | 8:30 PM
March 30, 2007 | [illegible] | 8:30 PM
APRIL 13,14 & 20,21, 2007 | ROCK THE VOTE | 8:00 PM
May 4, 2007 | HALE | 8:00 PM
T·E·A·T·R·I·N·O PROMENADE GREENHILLS
EVERY MONDAY | DANCE NIGHT | 7:00 PM
March 22 & 29, 2007 | RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO | 8:30 PM
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MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
1 PREMONITION 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 PG 13
2 300 12:15, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:10 R 13
3 NORBIT 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 PG 13
4 TURISTAS 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00 R 13

R-13
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NORBIT
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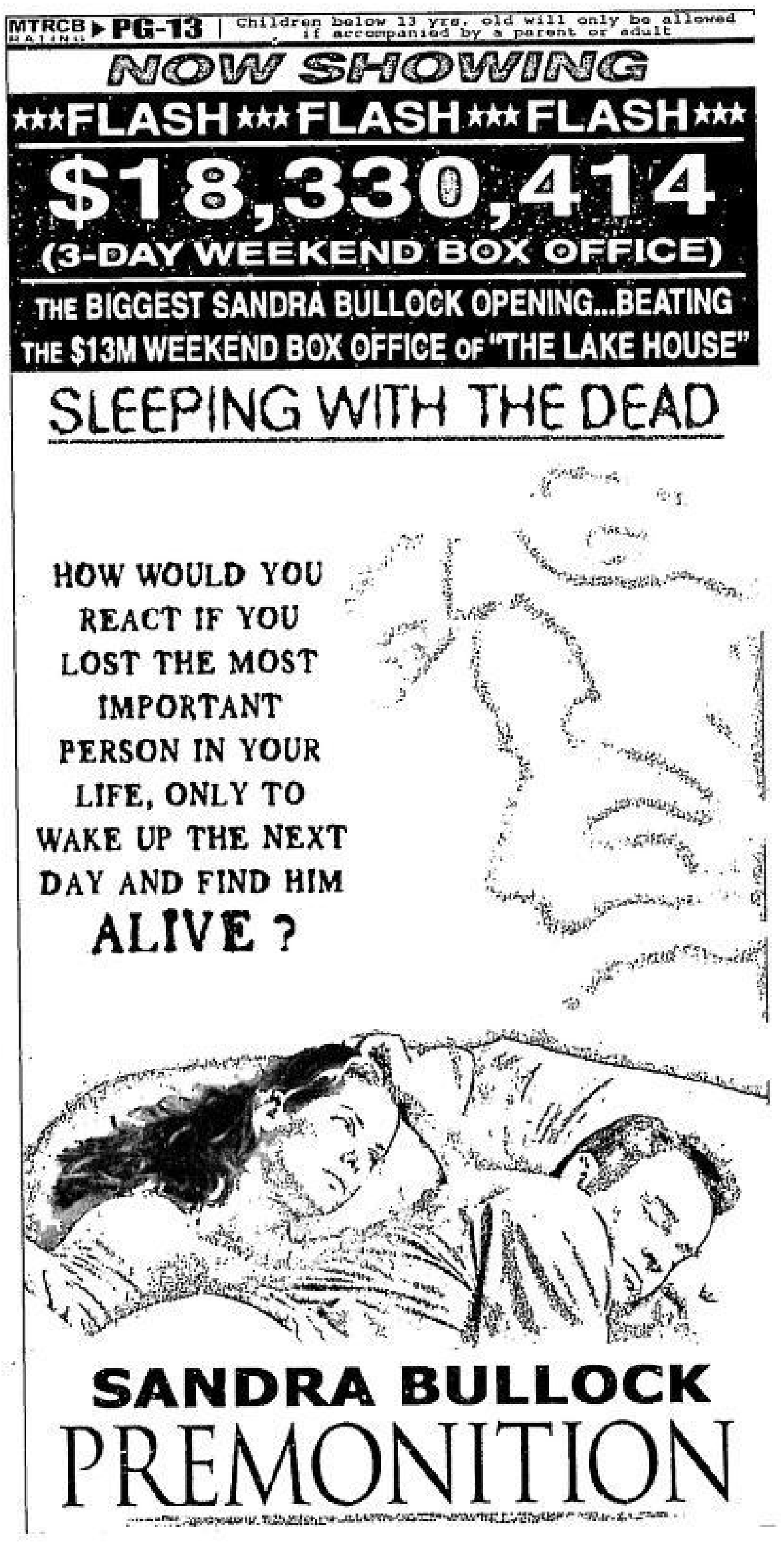

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SLEEPING WITH THE DEAD
HOW WOULD YOU REACT IF YOU LOST THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN YOUR LIFE, ONLY TO WAKE UP THE NEXT DAY AND FIND HIM ALIVE ?
SANDRA BULLOCK
PREMONITION

SHOW TIME

Reggae fest with Ziggy Marley

THE REGGAE GROOVE GETS GOING with Ziggy Marley tomorrow at the Poolside of the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila at 4 p.m.

The reggae bands scheduled to perform are Coffeebreak Island, Indio I, Junior Kilat, Kudos, La CucaRasta, Milagros Dancehall Collective, Peacepipe, Reggae Mistress, Rubadub, Spy and Tropical Depression. Call 891-9999.

Salcedo Nights

Barangay Bel-Air and the Women of Bel-Air, in cooperation with Dream Mobile TV, present jazz artist Mon David and the UP Jazz Ensemble in the Salcedo Nights Concert Series tomorrow 7 p.m., at the Jaime Velasquez Park, Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City. Open to the public. Call 899-6509 for more details.

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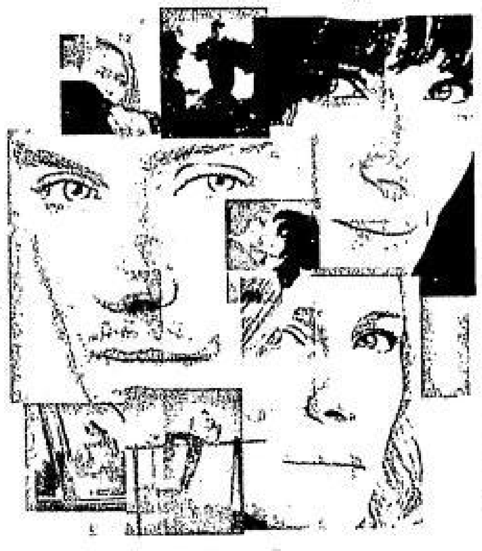

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FROM THE ACADEMY AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR ANTHONY MINGHELLA
LAW · BINOCHE · Robin WRIGHT PENN

BREAKING *and* ENTERING
Love is no ordinary crime.

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13

glorietta · GREENBELT

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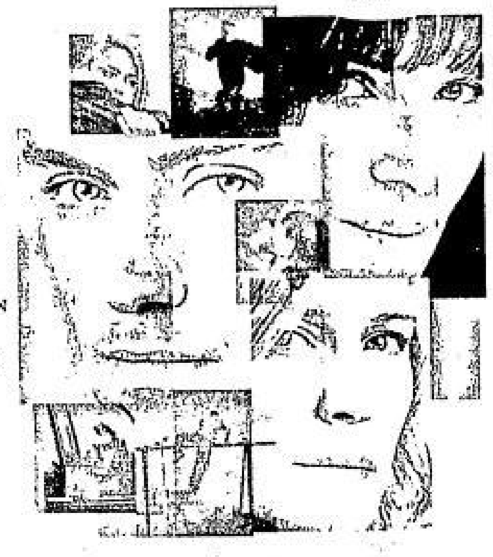

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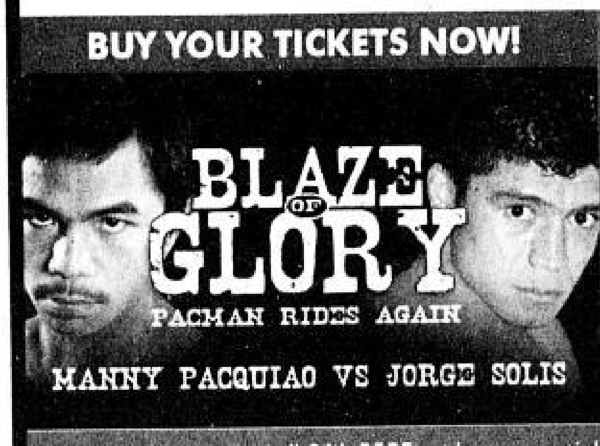

APRIL 15
SUNDAY / 8AM

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GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA : P1000
GATEWAY CINEPLEX : P600
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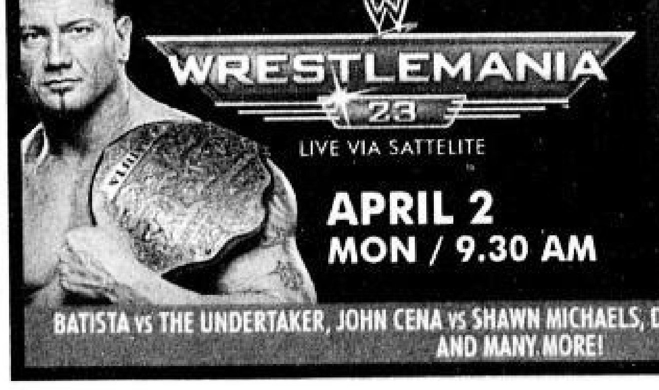
NORBIT 1:45 / 4:20 / 6:55 / 9:30	TURISTAS 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	PREMONITION 1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30	Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
ALPHA DOG 11:50 / 2:20 / 4:50 / 7:20 / 9:50	MONAY NI MR SHOOLI 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	ZOMBIES 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:30	
300 2:00 / 4:40 / 7:20 / 10:00	PATHFINDER 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	BECAUSE I SAID SO 12:10 / 5:00 / 9:50 DREAMGIRLS 2:20 / 7:10	NORBIT 1:10 / 3:45 / 6:20 / 8:55

Ali MALL 5

1	ZOMBIES 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30	2	TURISTAS 12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45	3	PREMONITION 12:45 / 3:25 / 6:05 / 8:45
4	ALPHA DOG 1:05 / 3:35 / 6:05 / 8:35	5	300 12:40 / 3:20 / 6:00 / 8:40		DOLBY DIGITAL · dts · SDDS



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TURISTAS R13 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25	PREMONITION 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30	DREAMGIRLS PG13 12:40,3:20 BECAUSE I SAID SO PG13 6:00,8:10,10:20
300 R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30	ALPHA DOG R13 1:45,4:15,6:45,9:15	NORBIT PG13 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25

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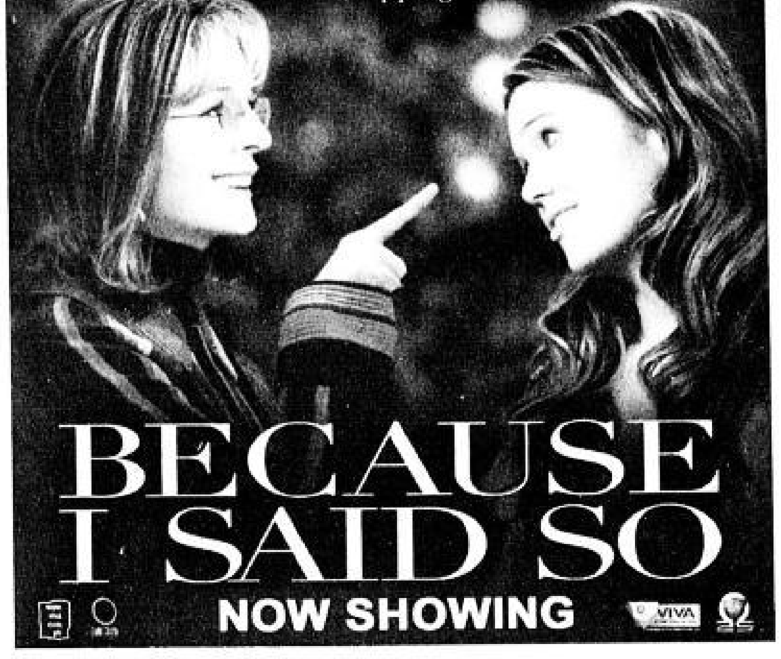
DIANE KEATON MANDY MOORE
Her mom shops for her food.
Shops for her clothes.
Now, she's shopping for her date.



BECAUSE I SAID SO
NOW SHOWING

MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13
STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

PATHFINDER
TWO WORLDS ONE WAR THE ULTIMATE BATTLE BEGINS

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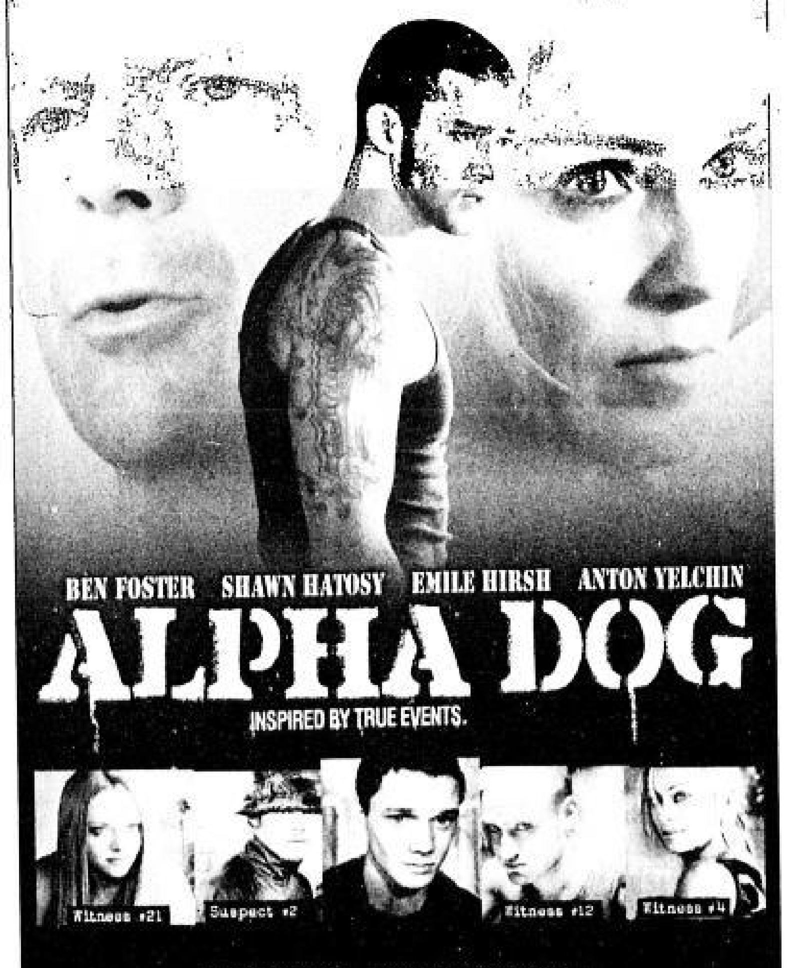
NOW SHOWING

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE WITH SHARON STONE AND BRUCE WILLIS



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MOVIE GUIDE
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1 (DOLBY) PREMONITION
2 (DOLBY) 300
3 (DOLBY) NORBIT
4 (DOLBY) BECAUSE I SAID SO

PREMIERE
(DOLBY) TURISTAS

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1 300
2 PREMONITION
3 NORBIT
4 TURISTAS

starmall
EDSA SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3 PREMONITION
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) MONAY NI SHOLI
5 RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8604285, 8433894

1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PATHFINDER
3 TURISTAS
4 300

THEATRES
[illegible]

1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271

1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

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1 (DDS) ZOMBIES
2 (SDDS) APHA DOG
3 (DTS) TURISTAS
4 GOLD (DTS) PATHFINDER
5 GOLD (DOLBY) PREMONITION
6 GOLD (SDDS) 300
7 GOLD (DOLBY) NORBIT
8 BECAUSE I SAID SO
9 MONAY NI SHOOLI
10 HAPPY HEARTS

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2 (DOLBY) TURISTAS
3 (DOLBY) PREMONITION
"PACQUIAO VS' SOLIS" APRIL 15, 2007

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY) PATHFINDER
2 TURISTAS
3 MONAY NI SHOLI
4 300
5 PREMONITION

THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
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1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PATHFINDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 ASK THE DUSK

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 ZOMBIES
3 ALPHA DOG

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)

1 300
2 MUSIC & LYRICS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 NUMBER 23
2 MONAY NI SHOOLI
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 HAPPY HEARTS

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY) PREMONITION
2 (DOLBY) 300
3 (DOLBY) NORBIT
4 (DOLBY) TURISTAS

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 (DTS) DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 (DOLBY) 300
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1 RESERVED
2 (DOLBY) RESERVED
3 (DTS) RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 (DOLBY) THE HITCHER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 NUMBER 23
3 (DOLBY) GHOST RIDER
4 (DTS) PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 (DOLBY) FLUSHED AWAY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 DEAD PEOPLE - 2
2 HAPPY HEARTS

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PEEP SHOW

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (DDS) THE HITCHER
2 SHE WALK BY NIGHT
3 NAGBABAGANG LANGIT
4 (DTS) MONAY NI SHOLI

Lianas MovieCity
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1 (DOLBY) DEAD PEOPLE-2
2 HUNGER FOR LOVE
3 (DTS) MONAY NI SHOLI
4 FIRST TIME
5 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 EPIC MOVIE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 MONAY NI SHOLI
2 OBSESSION

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Annie Brazil's eternal spring

ANNIE BRAZIL

RICKY REYES

"IT MIGHT AS WELL BE SPRING" IS ONE OF the tracks in a CD that Annie Brazil just finished recording. It should be the album title, if you ask us, the way she's carrying on. Richard Merck's mom outshone him yet again during her last month-long visit. She performed on jazz nights for three Wednesdays this month. She's flying back today to New Jersey, where she is based.

We just had to catch one of her recent performances and it was very much worth our while. No one sings like Annie still in these parts. Plus of course she was backed up by ace musicians, including veterans Roger Herrera on upright bass and Eddie Katindig on marimba.

Back to the album. The other tracks include "September in the Rain," "Lullaby of Birdland," "It Had to Be You." "Love for Sale"—all Annie types. Merck, who is producing it under Manna Records, says it will soon be available in major record outlets.

Mother Ricky's gift

Beauty chain magnate and TV host Ricky Reyes is helping secure health benefits for movie writers, especially freelancers. During a recent dinner with President Arroyo, the entertainment writers present were given PhilHealth cards. "I am merely showing the movie press how much I care for them," Reyes said.

Sexy dancers

Check out our favorite girls during the recent Enpress Awards—dancing ladies Andrea del Rosario and Regine Tolentino, who did their sexy thing in Hawaiian-Polynesian garb. By the way, the event's motif (summer) was refreshing. Everyone looked sunshiny!

ANDREA DEL ROSARIO

REGINE TOLENTINO

RUSHES

Adoption final

HANOI—Angelina Jolie finalized the adoption of a Vietnamese orphan on Tuesday, adding a fourth child to her family, according to the US-based adoption agency that organized the process. Jolie has remained out of public view since arriving in southern Ho Chi Minh City last Wednesday to pick up the 3 1/2-year-old boy, whom she has named Pax Thien, from an orphanage and traveling to Hanoi on Monday to complete the adoption. *Reuters*

Is that Keanu?

LOS ANGELES—Keanu Reeves grazed a photographer with his car while pulling out of a parking space in a southern California community, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place just before 7:30 p.m. on Monday evening in Rancho Palos Verdes, said a Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputy. *Reuters*

Cleaning lady

NEW YORK—Fashion model Naomi Campbell showed up in stiletto heels on Monday to start serving a five-day sentence mopping floors and cleaning toilets at a New York garbage depot after pleading guilty to assaulting a housekeeper. Wearing what appeared to be red-soled Christian Louboutin shoes but carrying a pair of black work boots, the 36-year-old British beauty strode past a crowd of television cameras and reporters as she reported for her 8 a.m. shift. *Reuters*

Graceful on prosthetics

NEW YORK— Heather Mills stepped up and showed she can dance on a prosthetic leg. Gracefully.

Mills' appearance on "Dancing With the Stars" on Monday night had been eagerly awaited, amid public speculation that she might experience trouble.

The ABC dancing contest, returning for its fourth season, was a big hit in the past. But adding a new level of interest is the presence of the 39-year-old activist and estranged wife of former Beatle Paul McCartney as one of the 11 celebrity contestants.

If there was anyone watching who did not know about Mills' prosthesis, host Tom Bergeron wasted no time at the beginning of the show reminding them that contenders include "our first performer with an artificial limb."

Mills proved graceful in a foxtrot with her partner Jonathan Roberts. The routine even included a kick with her artificial left leg.

The couple got a warm reception from the panel of three judges.

"You've got more guts than Rambo," said Bruno Tonioli, who went on to criticize not her legs but her top half—her arms—during the performance. *AP*

JOAN Baez, right, and Marianne Faithful, below, in concerts last week, in Germany and France. AFP

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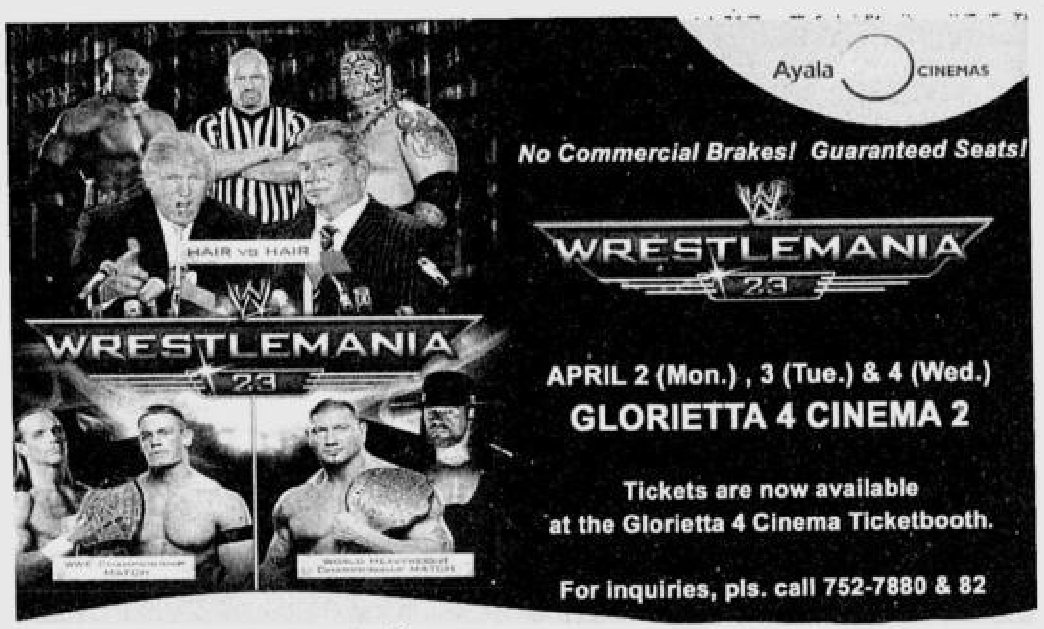
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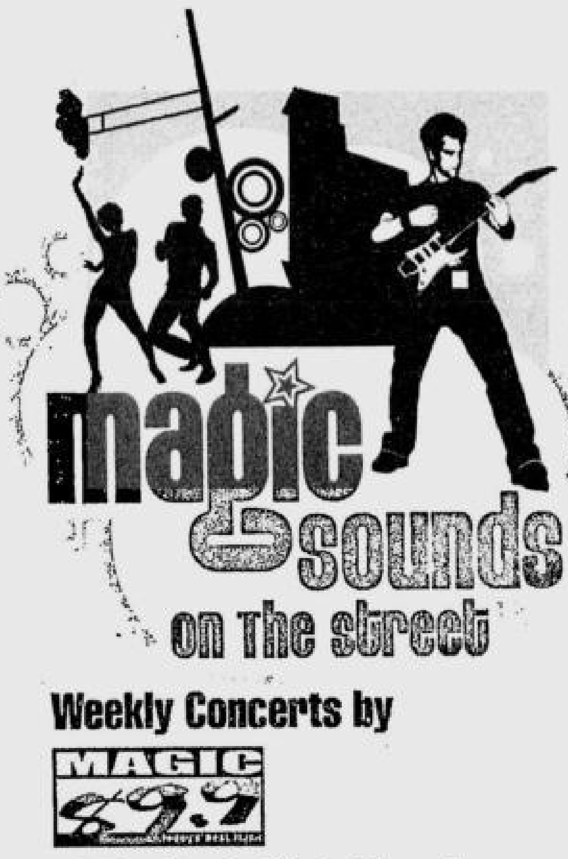
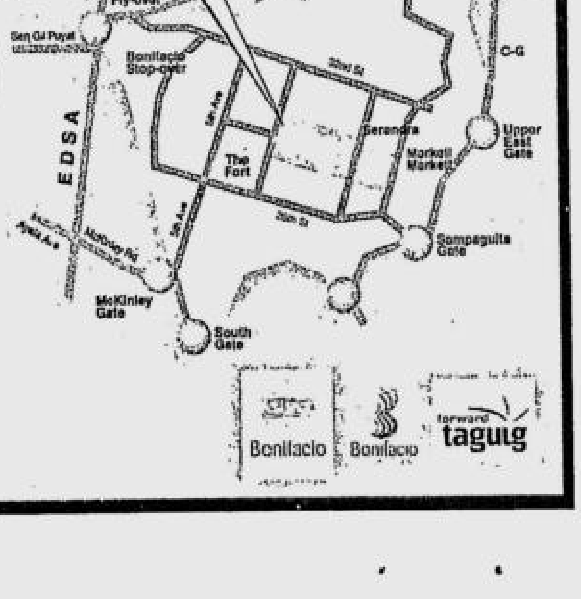
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JENNYLYN MERCADO

TAIL TALES

WESLEY THE SHIH TZU WAS A gift from (fellow Starstruck winner) Mark Herras three years ago. Migs the Chihuahua was a present from (former "Love to Love" partner) Jake Cuenca two years ago. Blue the Teacup Pomeranian was my gift to myself when I turned 19 last April. I go to Canine Couture for their clothes. I have them groomed regularly. Blue is extra-sensitive, we have to buy special unscented shampoo for him. Wesley is sweet, but Migs is quite mean. They're kinda unruly, especially when they're together.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

PHOTO BY ROMY HOMILLADA

CHEER FACTOR

PJ & MOM

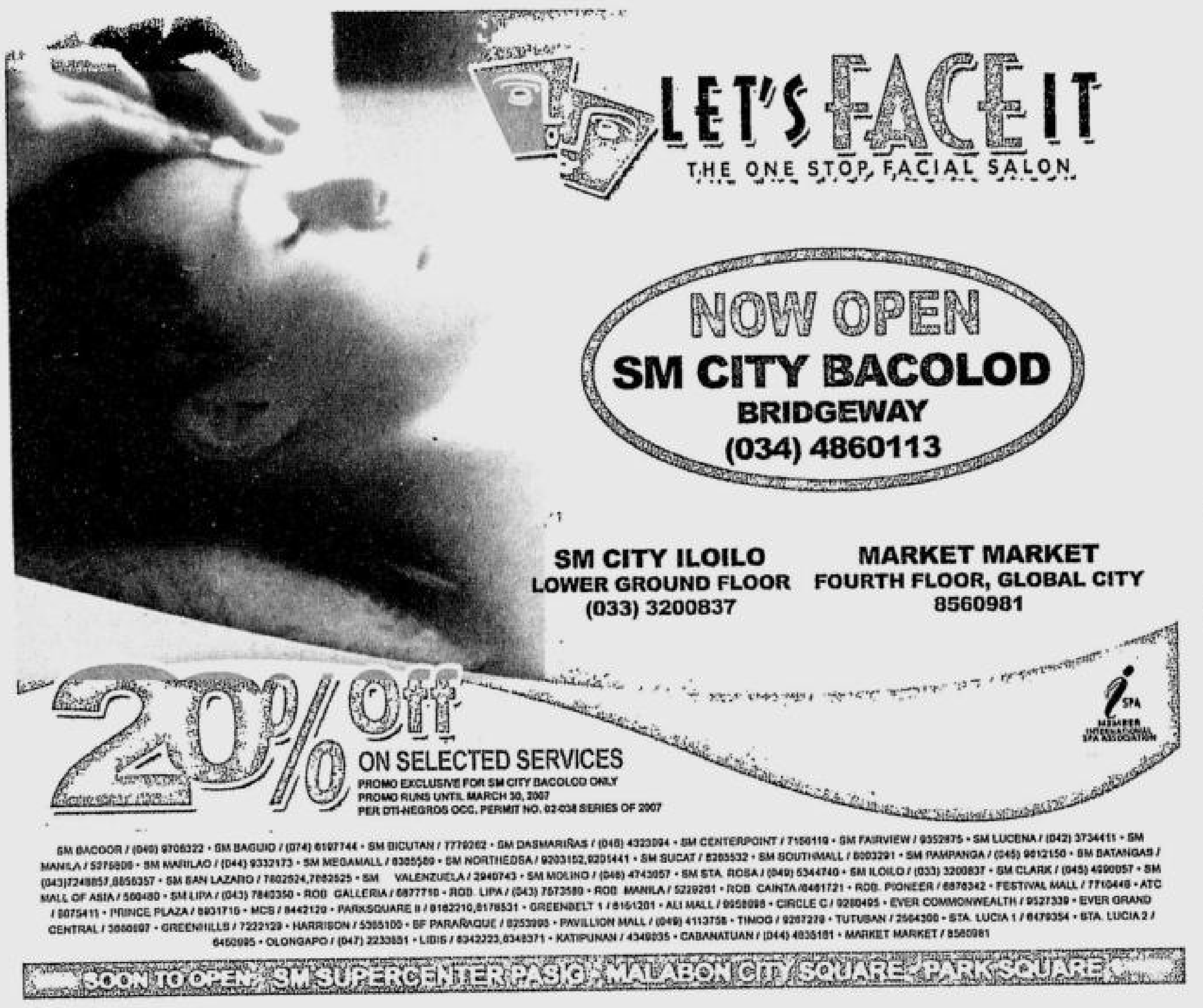
WE RAN INTO DONITA Rose, with her little PJ, in a Tagaytay spa. She was eager to have him show us some "tricks."

LJ REYES

BOOKS

I HAVE A STACK OF BOOKS ON MY STUDY TABLE IN my bedroom. Among them are books by Malcolm Gladwell and Paulo Coelho. "Blink" by Malcolm Gladwell was recommended to me by two people: a friend and a teacher (from De La Salle University, where she's on her sophomore year, taking up Economics and Management of Financial Institutions). I'm not really that fond of reading because I get bored easily, but I found this particular book interesting. As its subtitle ("Thinking Without Thinking") suggests, it teaches you effective decision-making. In a minute, you should know what to do, which to choose from a set of options. Gladwell is also the author of "The Tipping Point." I also read novels by Paulo Coelho like "The Alchemist" and "The Zahir." I can't focus on books and schoolwork on the set, though. I prefer to read in my bedroom where I can concentrate. I also do my school assignments there. My bedroom is perfect for reading because it's very relaxing and decorated like a beach house.

Bayani San Diego Jr.
PHOTO BY ROGER CARPIO



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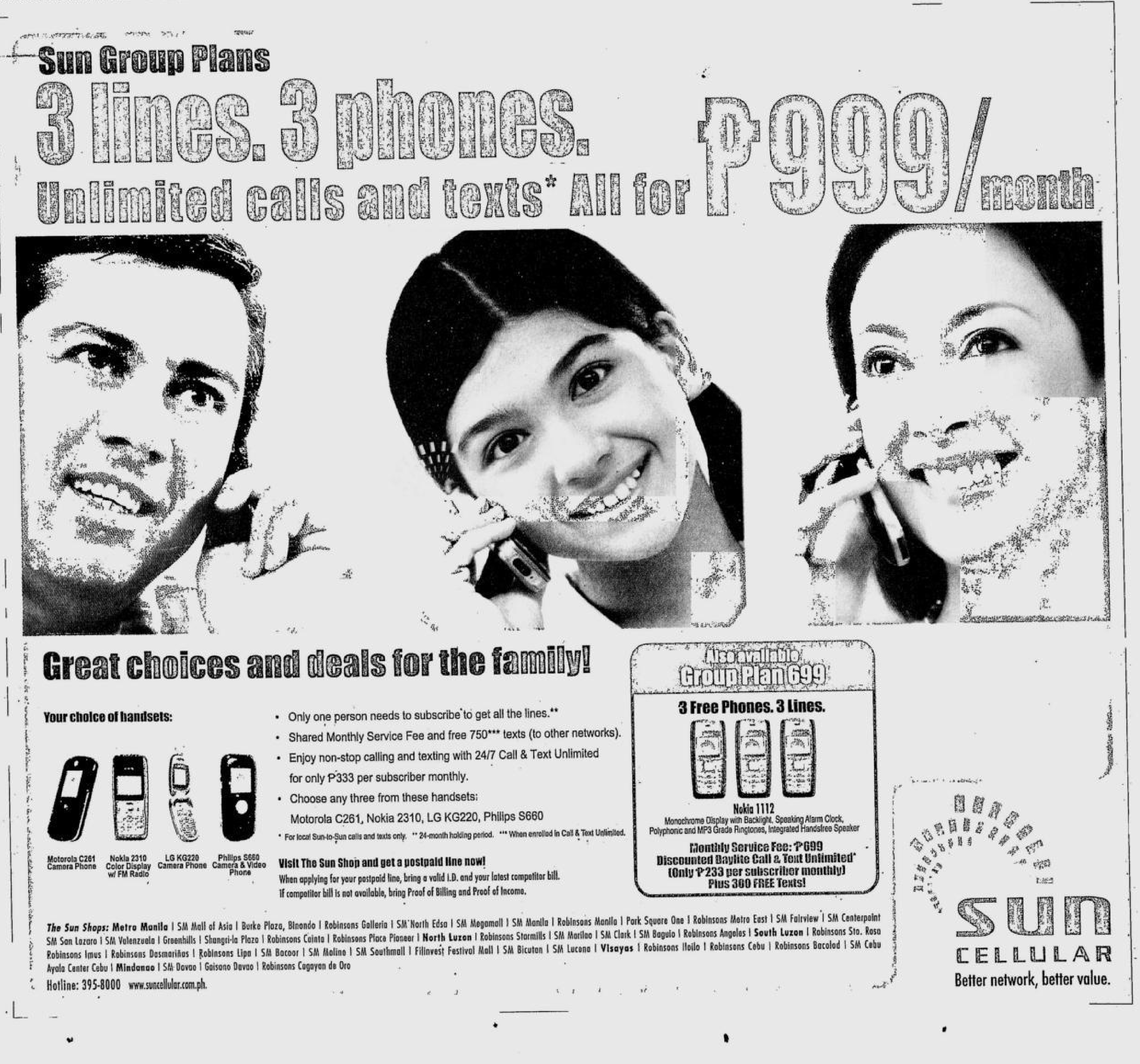

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2 PATHFINDER
3 NORBIT
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 ALPHA DOG
6 ZOMBIES
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NORBIT
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1 ALPHA DOG
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 ZOMBIES
4 PATHFINDER
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 BECAUSE I SAID SO
7 300
8 NORBIT
9 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
10 YOU GOT ME
11 TURISTAS
12 PREMONITION

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 TURISTAS
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 PREMONITION
4 300
5 NORBIT
6 PATHFINDER
7 HAPPY HEARTS
8 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
9 ALPHA DOG
10 YOU GOT ME
11 SIQUIJOR
12 ZOMBIES

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 TURISTAS
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 NORBIT
7 DREAMGIRLS
8 PREMONITION
9 GHOST RIDER
10 ZOMBIES
11 PATHFINDER
12 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 NORBIT
2 TURISTAS
3 300
4 PREMONITION
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 ZOMBIE
7 PATHFINDER
8 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
9 ALPHA DOG
10 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 PREMONITION
2 300
3 ZOMBIES
4 TURISTAS
5 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
6 NORBIT

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 PREMONITION
2 NORBIT
3 ZOMBIES
4 300
5 ALPHA DOG
6 PATHFINDER
7 HAPPY HEARTS
8 TURISTAS
9 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 TURISTAS
2 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 TURISTAS
2 ALPHA DOG
3 PREMONITION
4 PATHFINDER
5 NORBIT
6 300
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
11 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
12 ZOMBIES

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 300
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 DREAM GIRLS
4 PATHFINDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 300
2 DREAMGIRLS
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2 300
3 TURISTAS
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7 TURISTAS
8 PATHFINDER

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1 300
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 NUMBER 23
4 THE HITCHER
5 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
6 HAPPY HEARTS

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1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

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1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 YOU GOT ME
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4 EPIC MOVIE

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1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 300
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 THE HITCHER
5 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
4 THE HITCHER

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1 YOU GOT ME
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3 THE HITCHER
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1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
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3 300
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2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
6 EPIC MOVIE

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2 THE HITCHER
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 NUMBER 23
2 RESERVED
3 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
4 300
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 THE FOUNTAIN
7 RESERVED
8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 300
3 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
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5 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
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1 300 • THX
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2 NORBIT
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 TURISTAS
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50
4 ALPHA DOG
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
5 PREMONITION
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
6 ZOMBIES
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50
7 PATHFINDER
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50
8 indieSine: ANAK ng TINAPA 1:30 3:05
SA AKING PAGKAGISING 5:20 7:25 9:30
9 BECAUSE I SAID SO 12:00 2:10
DREAMGIRLS 4:40 7:20 10:00
10 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

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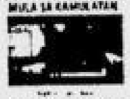
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12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
12:20 2:20 4:20 6.20 8:25 10:00
3 NORBIT
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
4 TURISTAS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
5 ZOMBIES
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:30 10:00
6 PATHFINDER 12:30 2:50
300 5:10 7:30 10:00
7 ALPHA DOG
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 10:00

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1 PREMONITION
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12:55 3:40 6:25 9:10
3 NORBIT
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
4 ZOMBIES
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
5 PATHFINDER
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00
6 BECAUSE I SAID SO
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
7 TURISTAS
11:45 2:05 4:25 6:45 9:05
8 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

NOVALICHES
Ticket Price: P91 / P96 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 PATHFINDER
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
3 TURISTAS
4 ZOMBIES
5 300

PIONEER
Ticket Price: P100. 687-5378

1 TURISTAS
12.20 2:25 4:30 6:35 8:40
2 PREMONITION
1:10 3:35 6:00 8:25
3 NORBIT
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40
4 ZOMBIES
12:20 2:25 4:30 6:35 8:40

STA. ROSA
Ticket Price: P80 (049) 837-0907

1 300
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 THE HITCHER
5 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI

LIPA
Ticket Price: P 90 (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 EPIC MOVIE
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 THE HITCHER
4 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
5 DEAD PEOPLE 2

DASMARIÑAS
Ticket Price: P80 (046) 416-4332

1 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
2 300
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 PATHFINDER
5 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI

ANGELES
Ticket Price: P 90 (045) 892-2348

1 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
3 THE HITCHER
4 THE NUMBER 23

IMUS
Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838. (046) 471-8188

1 THE NUMBER 23
2 300
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 PATHFINDER
5 TURISTAS
6 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI

STARMILLS
Ticket Price: P80 (045) 875-1927

1 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
2 THE HITCHER
3 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
4 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
5 DEAD PEOPLE 2
6 300

BACOLOD
Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0459

1 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
2 RESERVE
3 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
4 THE HITCHER
5 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
6 THE FOUNTAIN / 300

ILOILO
Ticket Price: P70.50 (033) 336-8070.

1 300
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
3 THE NUMBER 23
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
5 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
6 THE FOUNTAIN

in celebration of THE WOMEN'S MONTH:
Witness the Strong Women Characters in the Return Engagement of this INDIE HIT!

Rome & Juliet

LOVE KNOWS NO RULES.

Opens on MARCH 28
at Robinsons Movieworld
BACOLOD

Cinema One Originals 2006
Winner, Best Actress
Mylene Dizon

Cinema One Originals & I.O.U. One Productions Present
a Connie S.A. Macatuno film

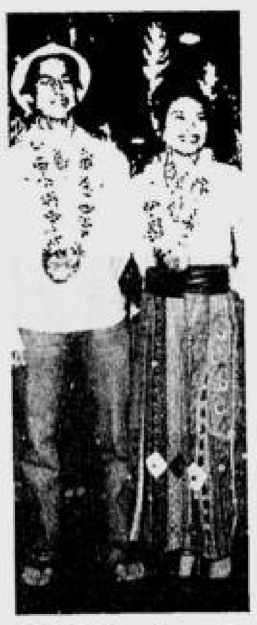
starring: Andrea Del Rosario Mylene Dizon Rafael Rosell Miko Palanca Lui Villaruz Liza Dino Crispin Pineda Frances Makil-Ignacio CJ Mercado Joshua Deocareza with Clydel Mercado and Ms. Tessie Tomas

MTRCB Rating: R18

RED CARPET

At the Enpress Awards

ANGEL AQUINO
PHOTOS BY RODEL ROTONI



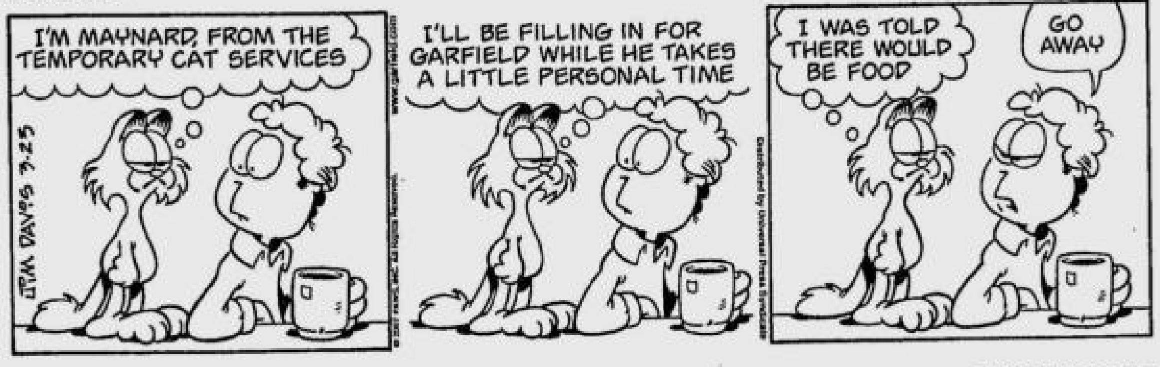
PAOLO Paraiso and Mylene Dizon

SID LUCERO and mom Bing Pimentel

JERICHO ROSALES

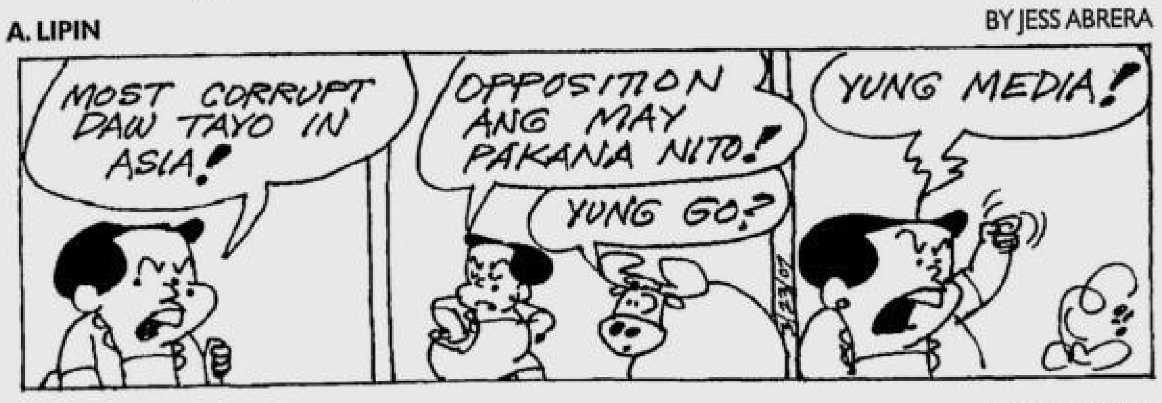
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


I'M MAYNARD, FROM THE TEMPORARY CAT SERVICES
I'LL BE FILLING IN FOR GARFIELD WHILE HE TAKES A LITTLE PERSONAL TIME
I WAS TOLD THERE WOULD BE FOOD
GO AWAY
JIM DAVIS 3-23
www.garfield.com

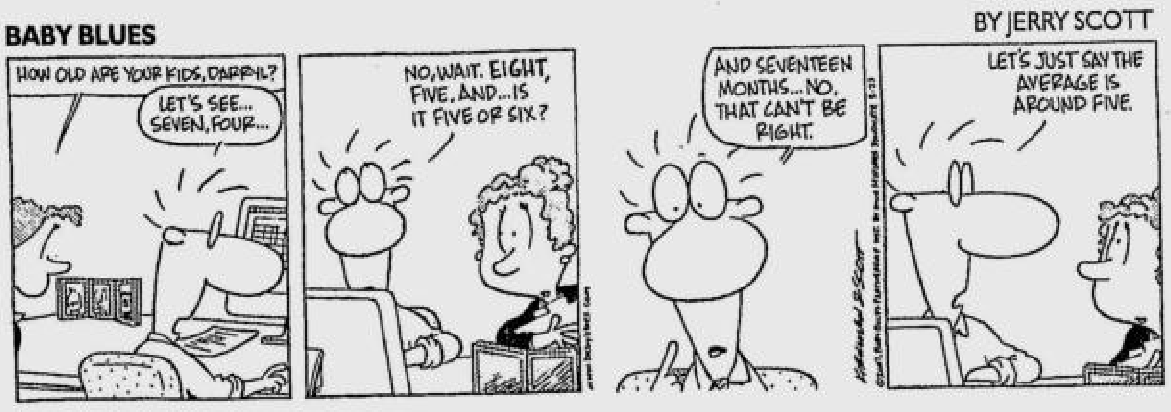
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MOST CORRUPT DAW TAYO IN ASIA!
OPPOSITION ANG MAY PAKANA NITO!
YUNG GO?
YUNG MEDIA!
3/23/07

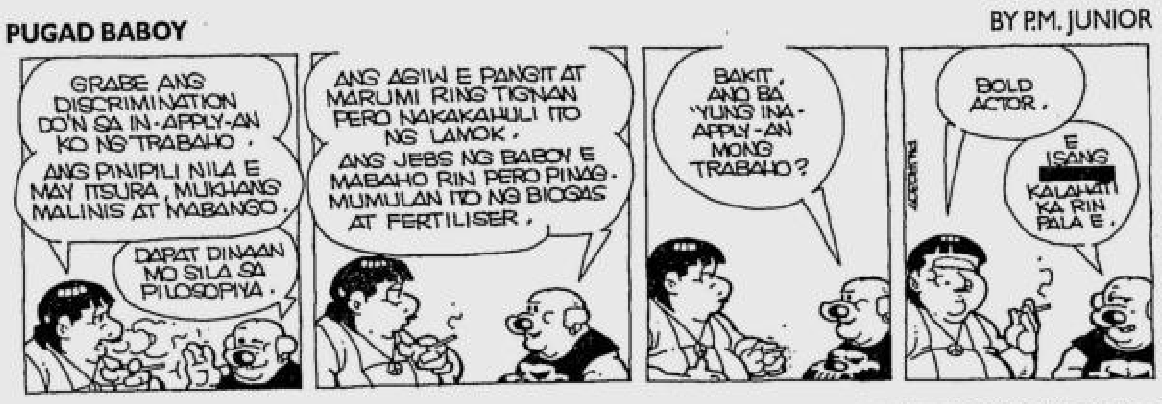
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HOW OLD ARE YOUR KIDS, DARRYL?
LET'S SEE... SEVEN, FOUR...
NO, WAIT. EIGHT, FIVE, AND... IS IT FIVE OR SIX?
AND SEVENTEEN MONTHS... NO, THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT.
LET'S JUST SAY THE AVERAGE IS AROUND FIVE.

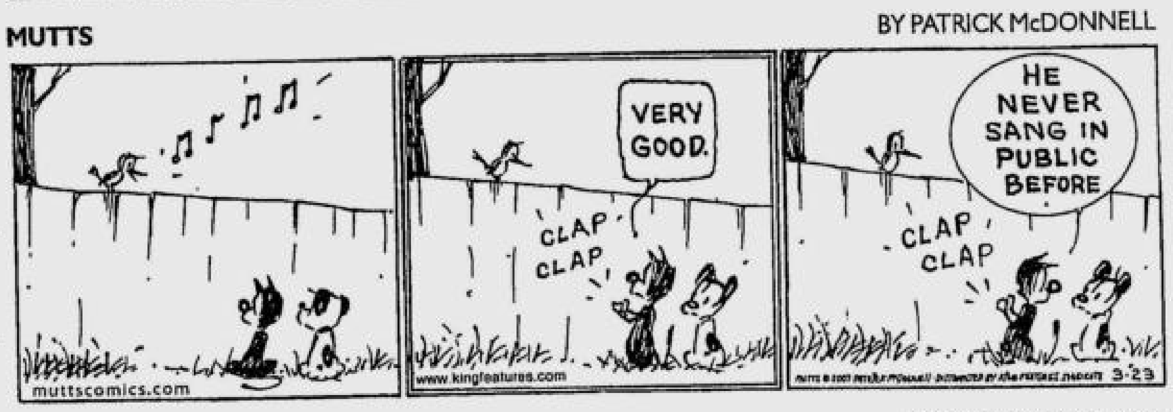
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


GRABE ANG DISCRIMINATION DO'N SA IN-APPLY-AN KO NG TRABAHO.
ANG PINIPILI NILA E MAY ITSURA, MUKHANG MALINIS AT MABANGO.
DAPAT DINAAN MO SILA SA PILOSOPIYA.
ANG AGIW E PANGIT AT MARUMI RING TIGNAN PERO NAKAKAHULI ITO NG LAMOK.
ANG JEBS NG BABOY E MABAHO RIN PERO PINAG-MUMULAN ITO NG BIOGAS AT FERTILISER.
BAKIT, ANO BA 'YUNG INA-APPLY-AN MONG TRABAHO?
BOLD ACTOR.
E ISANG [redacted] KALAHATI KA RIN PALA E.

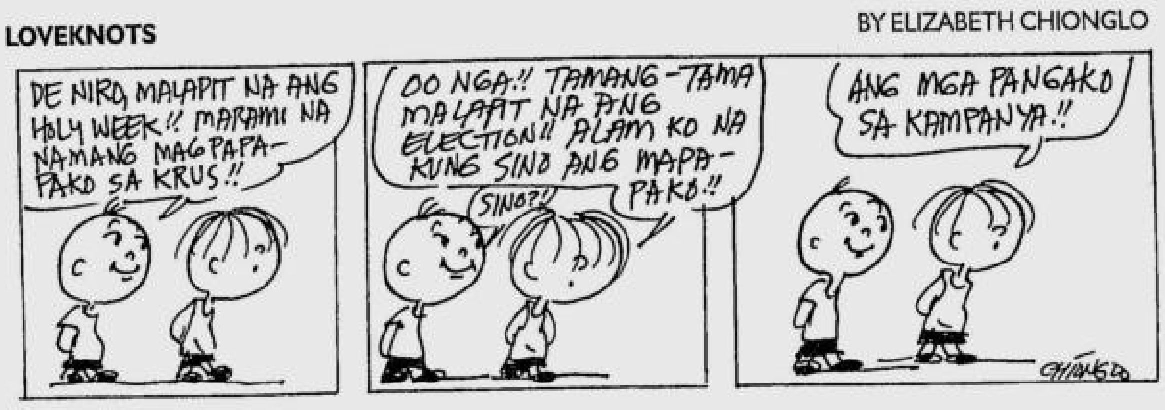
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


VERY GOOD.
CLAP CLAP
HE NEVER SANG IN PUBLIC BEFORE
CLAP CLAP
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
3-23

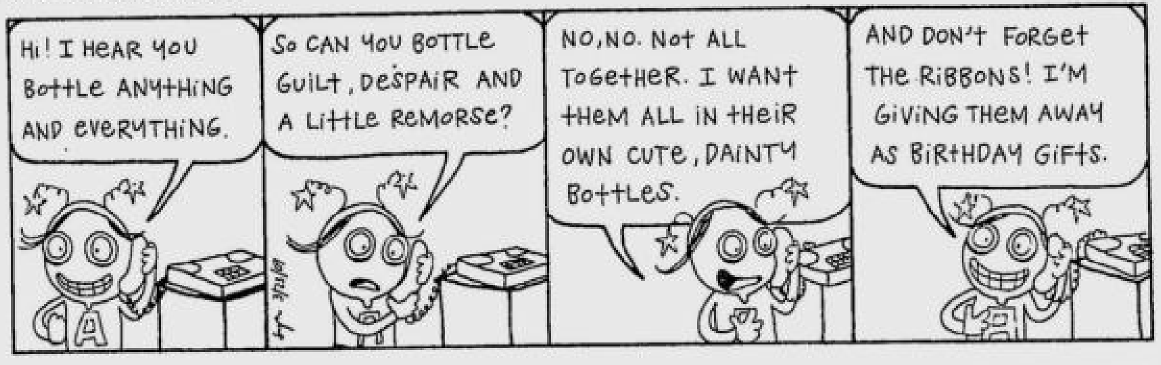
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DE NIRO, MALAPIT NA ANG HOLY WEEK!! MARAMI NA NAMANG MAGPAPAPAKO SA KRUS!!
OO NGA!! TAMANG-TAMA MALAPIT NA ANG ELECTION!! ALAM KO NA KUNG SINO ANG MAPAPAKO!!
SINO?!
ANG MGA PANGAKO SA KAMPANYA!!
CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

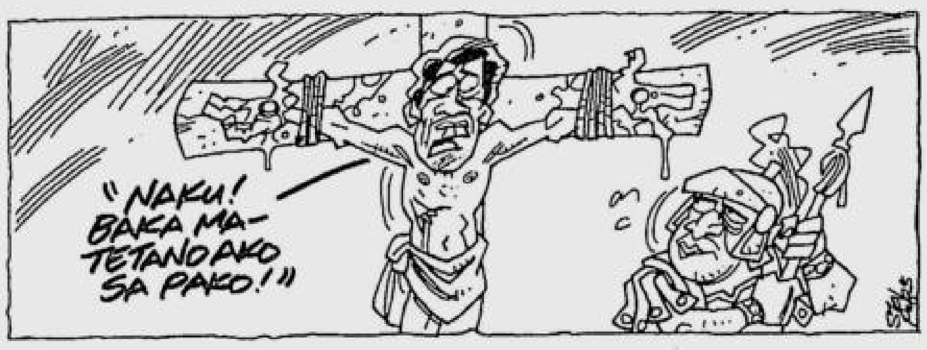
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hi! I HEAR YOU BOTTLE ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.
So CAN YOU BOTTLE GUILT, DESPAIR AND A LITTLE REMORSE?
NO, NO. Not ALL TOGETHER. I WANT THEM ALL IN THEIR OWN CUTE, DAINTY BOTTLES.
AND DON'T FORGET THE RIBBONS! I'M GIVING THEM AWAY AS BIRTHDAY GIFTS.

DIVINE COMEDY

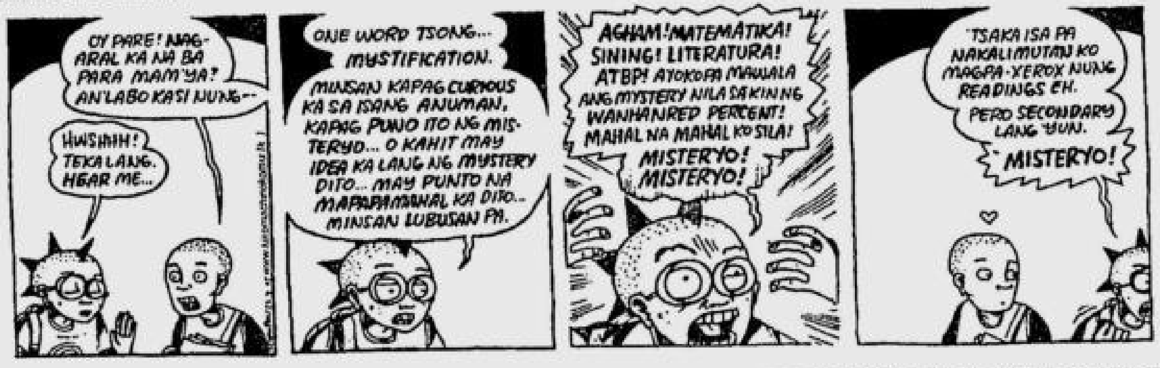
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

NANG NAKITA NI DEMAS NA NAG-"SEVEN LAST WORDS SI KRISTO, GUMAWA NA RIN SYA NG SARILI NYANG VERSION


"NAKU! BAKA MA-TETANO AKO SA PAKO!"

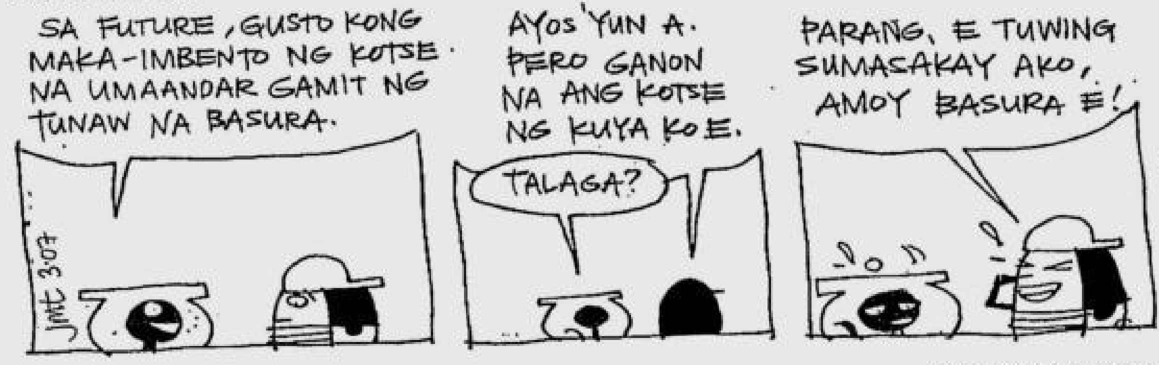
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


OY PARE! NAG-ARAL KA NA BA PARA MAM'YA? AN'LABO KASI NUNG--
HWSHHH! TEKA LANG. HEAR ME...
ONE WORD TSONG... MYSTIFICATION.
MINSAN KAPAG CURIOUS KA SA ISANG ANUMAN, KAPAG PUNO ITO NG MIS-TERYO... O KAHIT MAY IDEA KA LANG NG MYSTERY DITO... MAY PUNTO NA MAPAPAMAHAL KA DITO.. MINSAN LUBUSAN PA.
AGHAM! MATEMATIKA! SINING! LITERATURA! ATBP! AYOKO PA MAWALA ANG MYSTERY NILA SA KIN NG WANHANRED PERCENT! MAHAL NA MAHAL KO SILA!
MISTERYO! MISTERYO!
'TSAKA ISA PA NAKALIMUTAN KO MAGPA-XEROX NUNG READINGS EH.
PERO SECONDARY LANG 'YUN.
MISTERYO!

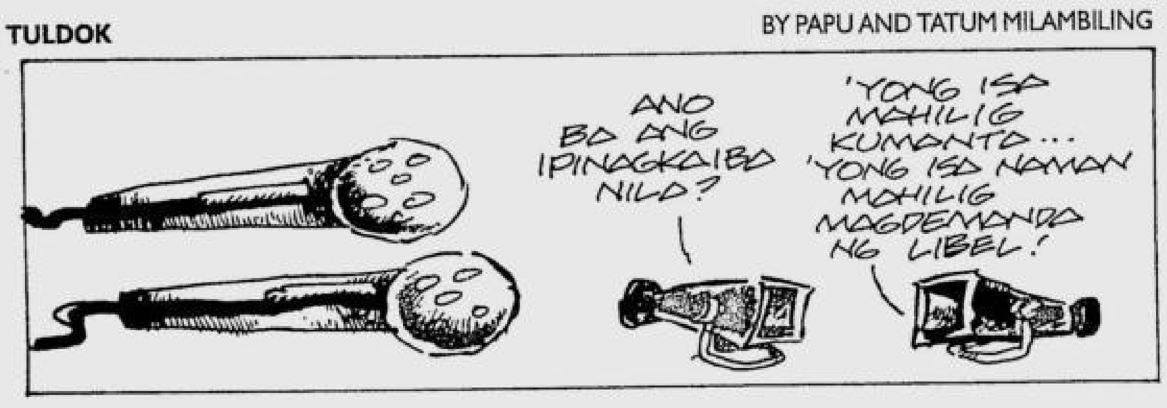
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SA FUTURE, GUSTO KONG MAKA-IMBENTO NG KOTSE NA UMAANDAR GAMIT NG TUNAW NA BASURA.
AYOS 'YUN A. PERO GANON NA ANG KOTSE NG KUYA KO E.
TALAGA?
PARANG, E TUWING SUMASAKAY AKO, AMOY BASURA E!
JMT 3.07

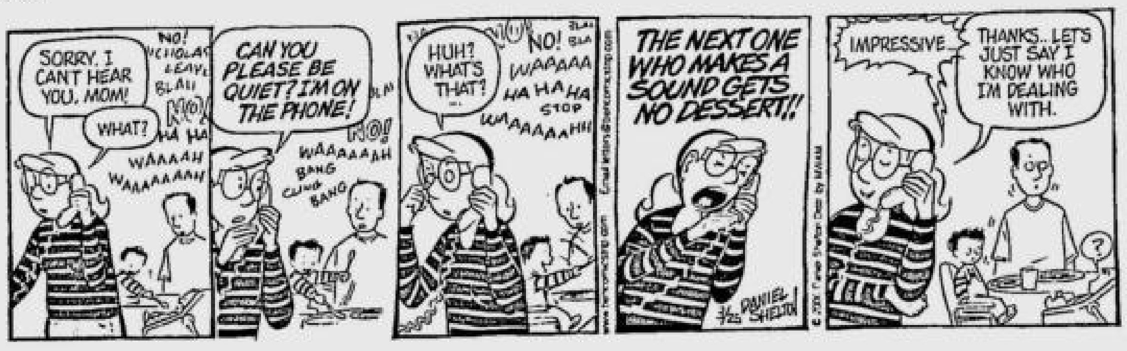
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

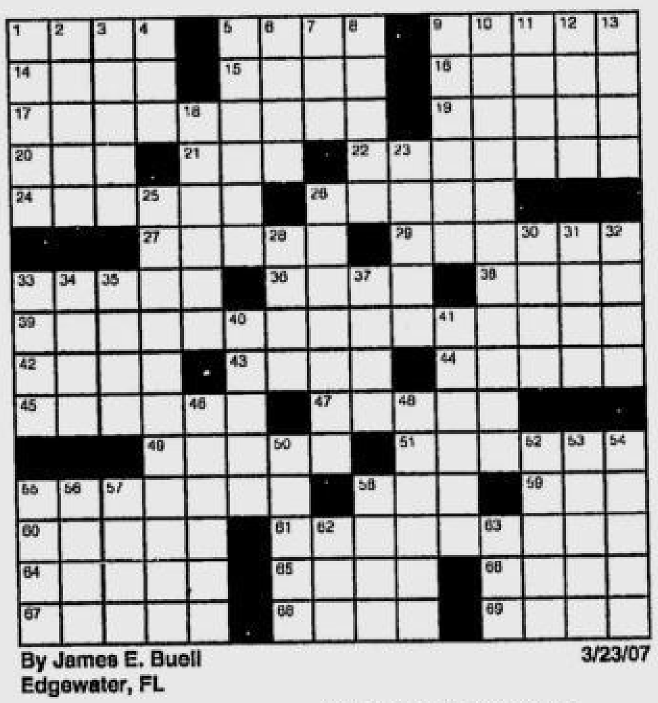

ANO BA ANG IPINAGKAIBA NILA?
'YONG ISA MAHILIG KUMANTA... 'YONG ISA NAMAN MAHILIG MAGDEMANDA NG LIBEL!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SORRY, I CANT HEAR YOU, MOM!
WHAT?
NO!
WAAAAH WAAAAAAAN
CAN YOU PLEASE BE QUIET? I'M ON THE PHONE!
WAAAAAAAH BANG CLING BANG
NO!
HUH? WHAT'S THAT?
NO! WAAAAA HA HA HA STOP WAAAAAAAH!!
THE NEXT ONE WHO MAKES A SOUND GETS NO DESSERT!!
IMPRESSIVE.
THANKS.. LET'S JUST SAY I KNOW WHO I'M DEALING WITH.
DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL

3/23/07

ACROSS
1 Papa's mate
5 Laugh heartily
9 Model T's descendant
14 Visa alternative
15 Toledo's lake
16 Sound
17 Commander of Apollo 13
19 Just right
20 Lennon's love
21 Singer McGraw
22 Stalemate
24 Gangster's gat
26 Dutch genre painter
27 In what way?
29 Choice morsel
33 Hump on slopes
36 To a distance
38 Switch ending?
39 Good title for this puzzle?
42 Fringe benefit
43 Appear to be
44 Examine for value
45 Call it a go
47 Notational sign in music
49 Jump for joy
51 Ill will
55 Sea cow
58 Atmosphere
59 "Norma __"
60 Aphorism
61 First pilot to fly solo around the world
64 Come of age
65 Lupino and Tarbell
66 Narrow margin
67 Get under way
68 Sound unit
69 Teeny

DOWN
1 Field of study
2 Protein acid
3 In-box items
4 Rose of Guns N' Roses
5 Comment on
6 Provo neighbor
7 Feel unwell
8 Kindled anew
9 Taiwan's capital
10 "To Fly and Fight" author
11 Caesar's last day
12 Narrow inlets
13 Pineapple brand
18 Annette of "Smallville"
23 French measure
25 First pilot to travel faster than sound
26 Most lenient
28 Rational
30 JFK and RFK
31 Farm Belt state
32 Kingfisher relative
33 Atlas contents
34 SSS designation
35 Lake Michigan port city
37 Lamenter's words
40 Matter of contention
41 Pet songbird
46 Breadth
48 Dolphins QB, once
50 John L. or Jerry Lee
52 Zagreb native
53 Caravan stop
54 Give it another go
55 "Total Recall" planet
56 Door to get ore?
57 California valley
58 Greenspan or Ladd
62 Altar vow
63 __ Beta Kappa

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

E	A	R	T	H		D	E	S		R	E	A	D	S
S	H	O	R	E		A	M	E		O	R	I	E	L
S	O	M	E	M	E	N	I	N		N	A	O	M	I
E	Y	E		A	W	A	R	D	E	D		L	O	N
			S	T	A	N		S	L	O	W	I	N	G
T	E	L	L	I	N	G	A	F	I	S	H			
E	L	I	O	T			G	O	T		Y	A	W	N
E	S	S		E	N	C	O	R	E	D		F	R	O
M	A	T	E		I	O	N			A	P	R	I	L
			S	T	O	R	Y	M	A	Y	G	O	T	O
P	L	A	C	E	B	O		A	B	B	A			
L	I	P		R	E	N	E	G	E	R		A	E	C
A	G	A	R	S		A	N	Y	L	E	N	G	T	H
T	H	R	O	E		D	N	A		A	N	I	T	A
O	T	T	E	R		O	A	R		K	E	N	A	N

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3/23/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're curious about everything in life, and you're philosophical in your observations. This is why you explore so many different things and know people from all walks of life. You want to touch, taste, smell and feel everything. This is why you're spontaneous and sometimes impetuous. Heads up, because the year ahead might be one of the best years you have ever had. Dream big!
Birthdate of: Keri Russell, actress; Hope Davis, actress; Roger Bannister, runner.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Ah-ha! Patience paid off. Where yesterday you were blocked, today, you see a light at the end of the tunnel. Sometimes (not always) it pays to hold one's tongue.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is an excellent day to promote your own interests with bosses (or parents). Go after what you want. The gods are with you now.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Wonderful opportunities exist today to expand your world in some way—perhaps through new experiences, further education or even travel to some exciting place. Grab 'em!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Now you know what to do with confused situations related to inheritances, shared property, insurance matters or dealing with the responsibilities for others. Good! Trust your gut.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're able to work with others quite well today. Enthusiasm is a contagious thing. When one party gets excited about something, the other generally soon follows.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You can accomplish a tremendous amount at work today in large measure simply because you're enthused or excited about what you're doing. (That's always half the battle.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): What a flirtatious, playful day! Get out and enjoy the company of others. Let romance touch you, even in a small, sly way. Have fun with friends.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Major projects taking place at home really get an injection of enthusiasm from somewhere today. You'll get things done easily; family members will cooperate with you. Yay!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You can talk anyone into anything today. Your powers of persuasion are fabulous (primarily because you believe in what you are saying)!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Trust your financial hunches. You have an uncanny knack to make good business deals today. If shopping, whatever you buy might be expensive, but it will be a good choice in the long run.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You feel full of positive energy today. That's why others are so quick to follow you or do your bidding. (Nothing succeeds like the appearance of success.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today you feel better about life, and you might not even know why. Actually, it doesn't matter, does it? The feeling you have at the moment is all that counts.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		6		5		9		
				6				
9			7		4			1
		5				6		
1	7			9			5	3
		9				8		
3			8		5			9
				1				
		8		2		4		

Difficulty Level ★★★★

3/23

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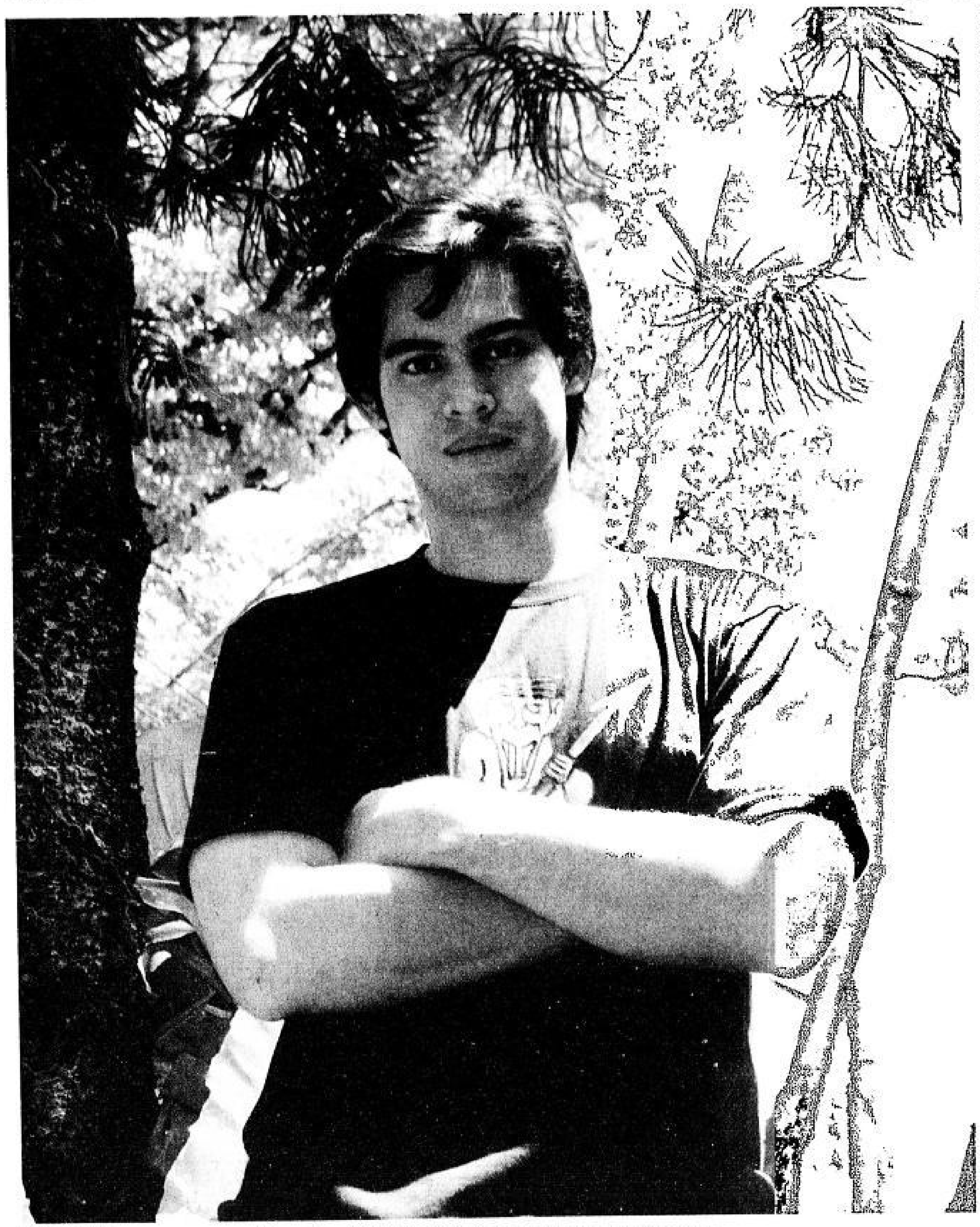
HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	8	2	4	7	3	9	6	1
6	3	7	9	8	1	2	5	4
1	4	9	5	6	2	3	7	8
7	2	4	6	3	5	1	8	9
3	1	8	7	9	4	6	2	5
9	5	6	2	1	8	7	4	3
4	6	3	1	5	7	8	9	2
8	7	5	3	2	9	4	1	6
2	9	1	8	4	6	5	3	7

Difficulty Level ★★★



IN THE 700-sq. m. compound's garden. "I've lived here for all of my 26 years," he says

FORMAL living room is in soothing shades of green and white.

HOME BODY

Model-actor hunk lives in a 'no-fuss, no-frills' duplex with his parents and two sisters

MOM MARIAN used her three children's magazine and newspaper clippings as wallpaper in the den, Paolo's favorite hangout.

PLAYING video games on the Xbox is a fave pastime.

Paraiso found

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by August de la Cruz

IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THAT YOU ARE greeted by a half-naked hunk at the gate. But here he is, Paolo Paraiso, in basketball shorts and nothing else, apologizing profusely because he has "just gotten out of bed."

Ah, the bedroom. Now, there's a thought. A beefcake boudoir? Sorry, no.

His bedroom is a no-fuss, no-frills affair—like the occupant himself.

"There's just a bed and lots of cabinets," Paolo says.

Very functional.

In the closets, he keeps shirts, jackets, jeans, and tons of baseball caps along with an extensive collection of comic books.

"I have black bedspreads, but my mom has changed it to white and mint green for the summer," he relates.

Now, for a reality check.

Far from a bachelor's pad, this Quezon City home is half of a duplex that Paolo shares with his two sisters and parents. Right next door is his grandmom.

A frequent visitor is his two-year-old son Tomas Miguel.

Although he is separated from Tomas' mom, actress Mylene Dizon, they've maintained a cordial relationship and share parenting chores.

"Usually, Tomas spends weekends here. And whenever Mylene has overnight tapings or shootings, he also stays with me," Paolo says.

He jokes that his home has become Tomas' house. "He has framed pictures in every corner. He's my mom's *unico hijo*. First grandchild *kasi*."

Not to worry, Paolo and sisters—models Bubbles and Dimples—have their share of snapshots displayed in the house.

In fact, mom Marian, a former Karilagan model and sister of beauty queen Yogi Dominguez, has turned the downstairs den into a shrine to the modeling careers of her three children.

"She used our newspaper and magazine clippings as wallpaper," Paolo says.

"As finishing, I brushed Elmer's Glue across the clippings—to make it look laminated," mom Marian explains her home project.

A few steps from the den is dad Ramon's meditation corner, where there's yet another framed photo of Tomas, of course.

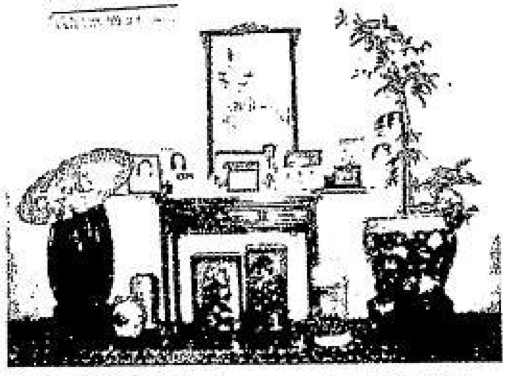
It's pretty obvious that the kid has taken over this house. Apart from his portraits, Tomas' stuff is everywhere—including a high chair in the dining room and a toy car in the foyer.

"His 'vroom-vroom,' which he likes to pretend-race with my pick-up truck," Paolo points out.

The pickup truck, a Toyota Hilux, is "an extension of the house," he explains. He can be O.C. about this vehicle, he admits. "I really fuss over it. I asked a friend, who owns a car-repair shop, to customize it. *Pina*-wide body *ko*."

Paolo hopes Tomas grows up in this neighborhood—just like he did. "For all of my 26 years, I've lived here," he says. "I've had the same set of friends since childhood."

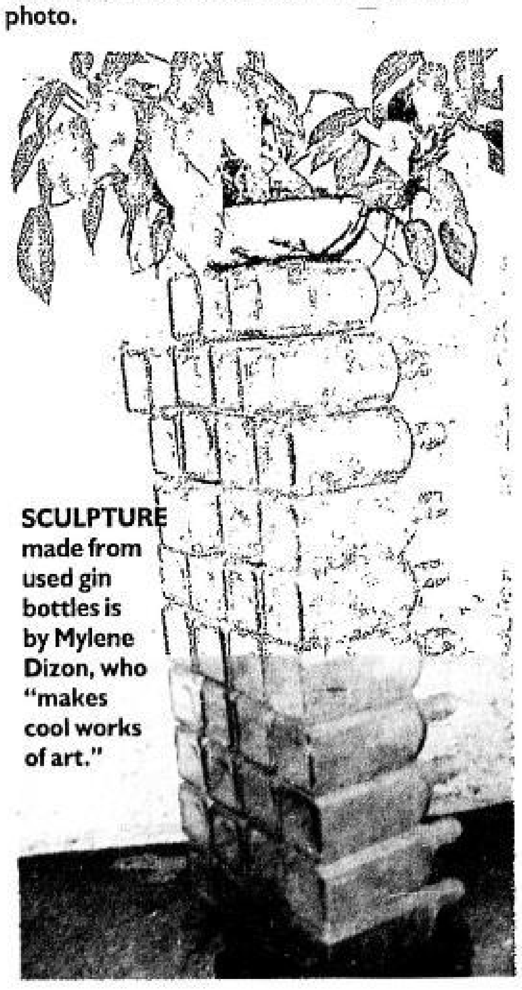
CUSTOMIZED Toyota Hilux is "an extension of the house," says the hunk.



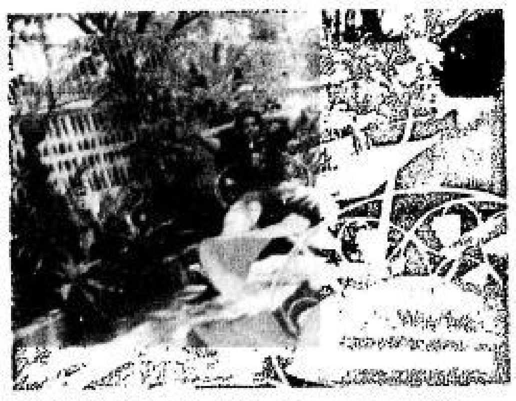
DISPLAYED in the foyer are Japanese dolls and Oriental décor (umbrella and jars), along with family photos, which include Tomas' and Mylene's, of course.

MEDITATION corner features his parents' wedding pictures and Tomas' framed baby photo.

PAOLO installed a TV set in the dining room for his son. Note the high chair behind him.



SCULPTURE made from used gin bottles is by Mylene Dizon, who "makes cool works of art."



HE SPENDS a lot of time here, where it's cool, to think and relax.

'TYPICAL boy's room,' is how mom Marian describes Paolo's bedroom. The bedspread used to be black, but Marian changed it to mint green and white for the summer.

CABINETS in Paolo's bedroom overflow with clothes, caps, jackets, jeans and his collection of comic books.

Guided bus tours, long-haul adventures and fun on the open road

Summer
2007

Text and photos by Raquel P. Gomez

Among the 25 tourists onboard the tour bus plying the Ilocos region, no one could pinpoint the exact location where the bus was, when it came to a screeching stop due to a busted tire. The bus stopped somewhere in Curimao town in Ilocos Norte, on immeasurable kilometers of lonely road surrounded by a vast and endless sea of onion fields.

For the travelers who all came from Manila and have set foot on the place for the first time, it was in the middle of nowhere and they were stranded. But that was the least of their worry. In fact, the break in the journey became an opportunity for these sleep-deprived travelers to file out of the bus and seek comfortable spots in the surrounding bushes to relieve their bladders.

As they waited for the bus to be fixed, they lively and gamely participated in a group game facilitated by the tourist guide. The game required the participants to sing as many love songs as they could. So under the noonday sun in the middle of nowhere in Ilocos Norte, 12 hours away from Manila, was a stalled bus rocking merrily to love songs and hearty laughs of stranded travelers.

Guided tours by bus in long road trips is all about this--literally getting into a long haul of adventure and fun out there in the open road. It is also about meeting misfortunes on the road and turning them into opportunities for bonding and friendship.

Espie Pineda of Engrande Travel Phils, a travel company offering local tours, says in recent years local travelers have increased in number reflecting the trend that many Filipinos want to experience the different places and cultures in the country. According to Pineda, summer is still the peak months for local travel and the top destinations are Ilocos region, Banaue, Sagada, Bohol and Palawan. But lately, she observes, travelers now comprise a bunch of families that include children.

84-year-old traveler

"The parents really encourage their children to join these travels. These places are being studied in the schools and they want their children to see the real rice terraces and the people who live in the mountains."

Filipino retirees and senior Balikbayans comprise the majority of travelers who join guided bus tours. Senior people have the time and the cash to invest in these travels. Marketing these destinations as interesting places to see, a memorable experience and good find for souvenirs are all that are needed to prod the seniors according to Pineda, whose recent ward was an 84-year-old traveler.

Senior citizens are an interesting bunch of travelers, according to Pineda who have established camaraderie with many of them during the trips. Pineda says seniors are endearing, easier to please, laugh a lot, shop a lot, and really enjoy the tour to the hilt. She remembers one senior woman who kept asking every hour or so if the mighty Cagayan River was already the China Sea. There was one senior woman fondly labeled by the bus group as "FHM girl" for dressing inside the bus with the curtains up after a swim. Socials in the bus are aplenty--bingo games, group games, karaoke chase the boredom away.

"Not only do they get to see these places they dream of visiting, but they do experience and participate in a lot of excitement and fun activities inside the bus," says Pineda. "The good thing that usually happens after a trip is

GUIDED/ H2

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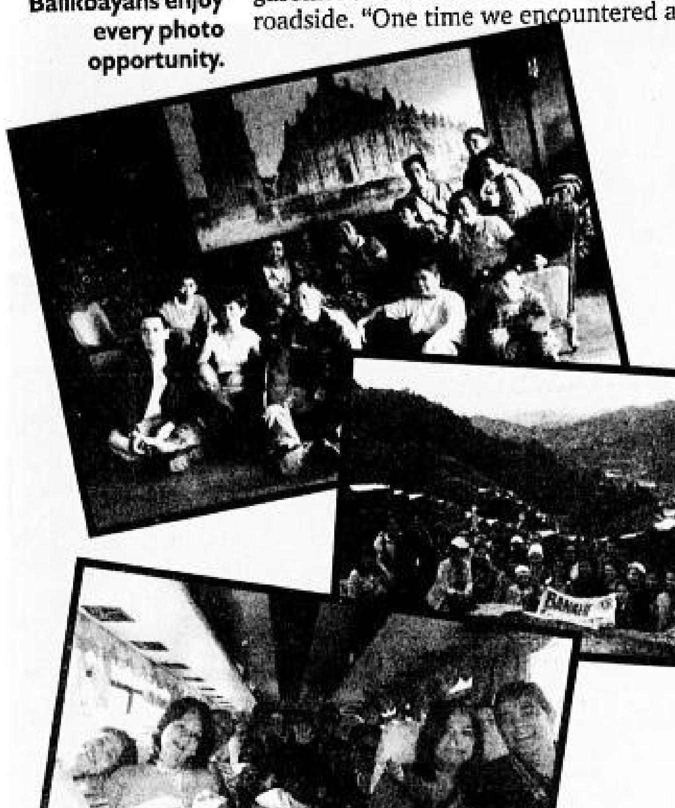
Guided bus tours, long-haul adventures

From page H1



LOTS of group shots: Families, friends, office workers from different companies, Balikbayans enjoy every photo opportunity.

the friendship that develops among the participants. They get each other's numbers and on the next trip, they'll be on it again. These tours are really opportunities to gain friends even among the senior people."

And of course, Pineda states they always hold lots of pee stops that mostly happen in gasoline stations and the tall grasses by the roadside. "One time we encountered a heavy traffic in Tarlac City. The tourists could no longer hold their bladders. They got off the bus and started knocking on doors of houses by the roadside," says Pineda.

Pray over

Long road trips are sometimes magnets for unfortunate circumstances or mishaps. Pineda admits that in her 10 years of guiding bus tours she had encountered a number of road misfortunes. She remembers the bus bound for Bicol broke down in the middle of Quirino highway. She and the bus driver had to walk several kilometers to the nearest barrio to get water for the bus engine. But the bus still wouldn't run. As a last recourse, she hopped on a vegetable truck bound for the next city to get another bus to fetch the stranded tourists.

"The bus I got had no air-conditioning unit. When we finally arrived in Legaspi City and checked in at the hotel, we were all horrified by our reflection on the hotel mirrors. The wind totally messed up our hair. We all had a good laugh about that," Pineda happily recalls.

One time during a tour of Cagayan region, the bus broke down twice due to engine failure. Rather than be stranded in Santiago, Isabela for a day to wait for the bus to be fixed, the group decided to go to Banaue via hired jeepney to take them there. This time however, the jeepney broke down in Kiangan town. Thinking that bad luck was happening on that tour and thinking that one person among them was bringing that bad luck, the group held a pray over to drive away the bad spirit. After the pray over, everything went smoothly, the jeepney and bus all worked and the group went back to Manila safe and happy.

Aside from the adventure and fun, guided bus tours offer a great deal of knowledge about the history, people, and culture of the places. Pineda says guided tours are very educational and many of these information aren't found in the books, such as finding where to buy the cheapest and quality commodities and produce in certain towns or finding out why a certain culture has this manner of burying their dead. Guided tours allow for opportunities for tourists to mingle with and experience the way of life of other people even for just a few days.

"We make our travelers climb a mountain to visit an Ifugao village, take a swim in Pagudpod, explore the caves in Callao, give homage to the Virgin Mary in Piat or Penafrancia, know how salt or fish sauce is made in Asingan or Lingayen, taste coconut crab in Batanes, and travel back in time in the Heritage Village in Vigan."

These loads of fun, adventure and whole gamut of experiences are captured in the hundreds of photographs tourists take and bring home with them. So, hop on the bus and join a guided bus tour. *E-mail the author at rgomez@inquirer.com.ph*

AS Ifugao people, tour participants play the part in Bangaan Village in Banaue.

A tale of a tour guide

"WHAT MAKES YOUR TRAVEL agency different from the others?" asks this writer of tour guide Espie Pineda of Engrande Travel Phils. She responds, "It's really in our motto-we give pampers."

Pun intended, by "pampers" Pineda means not the baby pee product but the pampering and care their bus tours provide the guests. On top of that, they also provide a great deal of things and activities to laugh and be merry about, particularly if you happen to be toured by Pineda herself, whose sense of humor is contagious.

Pineda hurls jokes charmingly in the air and her guests, many of them senior citizens, take the comedy like an afternoon sweet wine. A bus tour with Pineda is remembered because of the interesting places visited and the laughs shared with other travelers.

Pineda ended up as a tour guide not because of her genetic sense of humor. A tourism degree holder from Polytechnic University of the Philippines, she started guiding tours for school children while still in college. She remembers receiving P50 that went up to P500 as allowance for the job training. The steady although little income made her consider becoming a professional tour guide.

After graduation and a series of contractual jobs in hotels, Pineda underwent a tour guide seminar at the Department of Tourism where she received her license as a professional and DOT accredited tour guide. She worked with two previous travel agencies and eventually ending up with Engrande Travel Phils. The rest is history.

"When I started as a tour guide in college, tourist buses with air conditioning were unheard of. We boarded these big old school buses to tour parts of Metro Manila and I was shouting the information about Edsa or Mandaluyong to the students because there was no microphone."

Information gathering and collation is a must for a tour guide. Pineda had her share of devouring books about the Philippines, cover to cover. She had also done a lot of ocular visits and personal data gathering in many places particularly in the North. Pineda's expertise are provinces in the North like Ilocos, Cagayan, and Mountain Province.

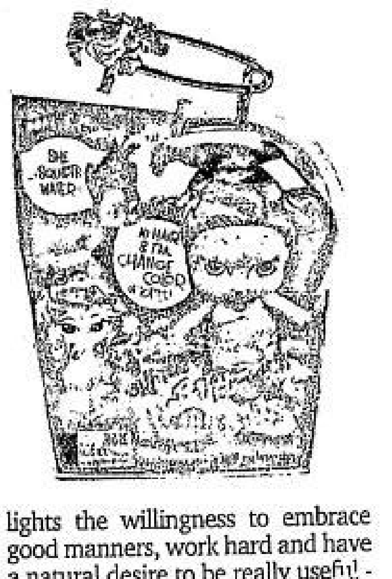
A tour guide's job is exhausting but nonetheless fun and rewarding according to Pineda. She most often guides tours to Sagada and Banaue twice a week, which means once she's back in Manila, she'd go off immediately. "I'd usually leave my extra clothes in Sagada because I know the next day I'd be back there again."

It warms her heart whenever the guests approach and thank her for the successful trip. "You'd feel that you have entertained them, that somehow you've satisfied their longing to visit those places and that you're able to explain those places to them. And the next time you'd see them again joining your tour. This is a very rewarding job." *Raquel P. Gomez*

TOUR guide with a passion: Espie Pineda

Cool toys for the hot summer season

BAN KEE TRADING INC PROUDLY presents its new line of cool toys for summer:



Gazillion Bubble Machine - Funrise Bubbles are the perfect toys for you if you are crazy about bubbles. Funrise is recognized for its infinitely superior bubble solution. The Gazillion Bubble Machine enjoys wide acceptance and popularity among toy fanatics of all ages. It includes cleverly designed 7-in-1 wands, plus bubble guns and blowers, and giant wands and motorized machines. It incorporates popular Disney characters such as Nemo Buzz Lightyear and Disney Princesses. With the Gazillion Bubble Machine, kids and adults alike can enjoy endless hours of bubble fun. Alternatively, a bottle of bubbles can be blown manually once the wand has been clipped into the lid for a more traditional activity.

Bratz Babyz Mermaid - Float away with the new Bratz Babyz Mermaid and their cute sea creature friends! They're makin' mischief at the pool or in the bath with cool color change hair and tails. Look out they squirt too! It's a mermaid magic and colorful Bratz Babyz to choose from.

Tamagotchi V4 - Tamagotchi Connection is an egg-shaped virtual toy that simulates the life cycle of a pet, letting kids experience the fun and responsibility of caring for their pet. Tamagotchi version 4 are enhance with new features such as amazing jobs to choose, cool new playmates. Tap into the Internet for more incredible surprises and games for more exciting ways of interactions. Live life with a new Tamagotchi version 4 today!

Thomas the Tank - Thomas & Friends is a popular television series that chronicles the adventures of Thomas, a cheeky little tank engine and his friends in the fictional island of Sodor, an idyllic place where all vehicles have their own personalities. This summer Thomas released Thomas steam engine a playset which real steam comes out from the engine. Thomas' world highlights the willingness to embrace good manners, work hard and have a natural desire to be really useful - the ultimate steam engine praise. Thomas comes with train sets, play sets and accessories.

WWE - If you like those back-breaking, head-smashing power-to-power action toys, you are hooked with the WWE action figure collection. Cutting-edge technology combine with authentic detailing based on programming in bringing about as perennial top-sellers. The WWE action figure collection showcases the larger-than-life personalities and events in the popular World Wrestling Entertainment tournaments. WWE toys like Ring Giants, Basic Figures, and Belts are available.

Flywheels - High speed, high-performance Flywheels car boast an impressive array of die-cast cars accessories and play sets. Flywheels features 100 percent authentic licensed replicas in 1:10 scale of the top models of leading wheel tire and break manufacturers in the market. With a simple pull of a ripcord, Flywheels racers can zoom at over 300 scale miles per hour and jump to over 25 feet in the air.

Gazillion Bubble, Bratz Babyz, Tamagotchi v4, Thomas, WWE, and Flywheels toys are exclusively distributed by Ban Kee Trading Inc and are available at leading toy stores nationwide.

The biggest kids' fair, family event this summer

SM AND THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER WILL STAGE "MOMS AND Kids Fair", the biggest kids' fair and family event this summer, on May 18 to 20 at SM Megatrade Halls 2 and 3. The venue will be dressed up to be a huge haven for kids and kids at heart bringing together all companies, products and brands that cater to kids and moms. To make it a certified blockbuster event for kids and the whole family, it will feature special events including a mascot and costume parade, giant kiddie parties, moms and kids fashion show and a musical play. Educational activities such as quiz bee, arts and crafts worskshop party, all-day day care center, screenings of educational shows and movies are in-store for kids. Other activities are sports clinics, singing and dance contest, pinoy games exhibition and sportsfest and the giant playground. In celebration of Mother's Day, there will be special events for moms like the hair, make-up and fashion make-over, mom's best pambaon and Sunday recipes and "My Mom and Me Look Alike Contest". Participating companies will offer treats and special discounted prices for post-Mother's Day shoppers. Special registration lootbags and other giveaways await shoppers and participants. For booth reservation, event sponsorships and other inquiries, please call Cut Unlimited at 687-0604 or 687-0654.

Travel around the Philippines

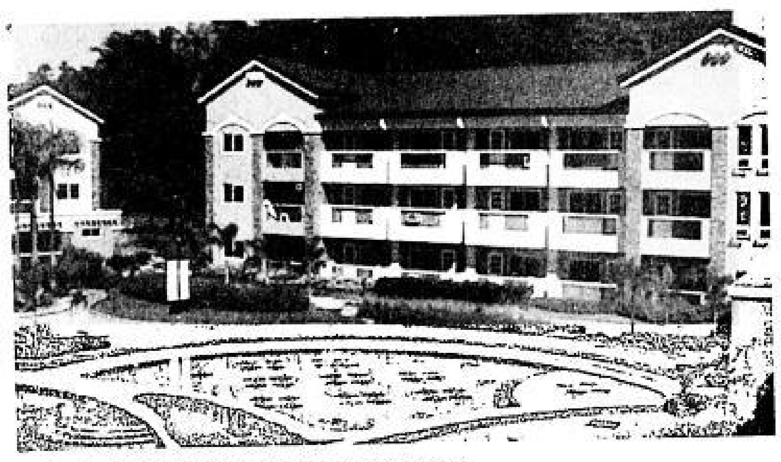
THE PHILIPPINES IS TEEMING WITH WONDERFUL SCENERY, ABUNdant in natural resources, and marvelous beaches foreigners frequent. Engrande Travel Phils makes it possible for you to visit the country's famous tourist destinations. It offers travel packages to Banaue, Sagada, Bicol, Donsol, Sorsogon, Batanes, Palawan (Puerto Princesa, El Nido, Coron), Bohol, islands in Cebu, and Davao. Experience the many colorful festivals which include Pahiyas, Kadayawan, and the Ati-Atihan. For inquiries and reservations, call Engrande Travel Phils at 851-0361,851-1549, mobile 0906-4038954 and 0921-9796165. E-mail engrandephils@yahoo.com.ph. Their office is located at Buenavista Bldg. 2, Quirino Avenue, Parañaque City.

Exciting summer courses at Tumble Tots

UK-BASED INTERNATIONAL PRE-SCHOOL TUMBLE TOTS HAS prepared an exciting package of summer courses and activities to hasten children's learning process and hone their abilities at a very young age. These include Active Play and Preschool camps, musical learning, reading, creative writing, and English as a second language, among others. Tumble Tots is located at the ground floor of Technoplaza 1 at Eastwood City Cyberpark in Libis, Quezon City (tel. nos. (02)687-6793, 687-6375, 0917-7010097) and along Mabini Cor. Araullo Streets, Davao City (tel. no. (082)225-1847). Worldwide, Tumble Tots has already benefited more than a million children through over 500 centers in the United Kingdom, Germany, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and now, the Philippines.

Great grills at Parque España

BEAT THE SUMMER heat with cool treats at Parque España in Alabang. Easter Sunday is welcomed with exciting games and delicious poolside grills at the rooftop restaurant Bistro Del Cielo. Beginning April 8, weekends of April and May are pure outdoor fun with lunch and dinner great grill deals. For a consumable charge of only P350++ for adults and P250++ for children, sample various tasty seafood and meat offerings. What's more, your cover charge includes complimentary access to the rooftop swimming pool from 1 p.m. - 9 p.m. See you there! For inquiries and reservations, call (+63 2)850-5847; fax (+63 2)850-5660; check the website at www.hospitalityinc.com.ph/parque.



4-3-2-1 SUMMER COUNTDOWN AT QUANTUM SERVICED RESIDENCES

This summer, get a refreshing break from all the hard work and stress of the mundane week. Quantum Serviced Residences offers both city or out of town options. The Subic Holiday Villas, located at the Subic Bay Freeport Area and The Malayan Plaza in Ortigas Center offer the best of both worlds. Both properties offer great relaxation facilities and are strategically located in the commercial areas of their respective cities. These Serviced Residences boast of fully furnished stylish units (studios, 1 and 2 bedrooms) complete with living, dining, and kitchen facilities and equipped with the trappings of the modern day lifestyle. From April 1 to May 31, you can avail of the Summer Countdown Promotion offered in the Subic Holiday Villas and The Malayan Plaza. Book a one bedroom de luxe suite for P4,000++ for the 1st night, P3,000++ for the 2nd night, P2,000++ for the 3rd night, and P1,000++ for the 4th night. Applicable for a minimum of 3 nights consecutive stay, with the fourth night convertible to a gift certificate which is valid until July 31, 2007. Above rate is subject to applicable taxes and service charge. Prior reservations are required subject to space and suite availability. Check in is 2 p.m. and check out is 12 noon. Guest may opt for a late checkout at 4 p.m. but subject to availability. For more inquiries and reservations, contact The Malayan Plaza at telephone number: 706-0055; Quantum Hotels Reservations at 864-0941 or e-mail Quantum Hotels and Resorts at sales@quantumsuites.com.

Keep your cool this summer

SUMMER IS OFFICIALLY JUST a few days away. As we are about to be pelted by the sweltering heat of the summer sun, we find ways to remain cool. "Cool" however does not simply equate to that state between cold and warm, or to shades, umbrella and sun block. Fashion, gadgets, crushes are just some of the things that girls find "cool" these days. But what they also think is cool is the actual feeling of being cool. Being cool means staying clean, fresh and pretty throughout the day. A real challenge this summer when the temperature is high off the charts!

What makes Fresher different from all the other feminine washes in the market is the actual feeling you get from using it. Fresher gives that unique feeling that keeps you fresh no matter what you do or how you're feeling. Fresher contains lactic acid and lactoserum that maintain the ideal pH level for a young lady's feminine parts. It's also hypoallergenic, making it safe and mild for everyday use. It also has Herbal Moisture Essence Plus that hydrates and defends the external genitalia from harmful organisms. It's also hypoallergenic, mild and gentle for everyday use.

Available in Fresh Bouquet, Fresh Miss, and Fresh 'n Pure, Fresher can be bought in leading supermarkets and drugstores nationwide. Being cool and staying cool is so easy with Fresher Hypoallergenic Feminine Wash!

'Pirates 4D' now showing at Enchanted Kingdom

THIS SUMMER, THE COUNTRY'S first and only world-class theme park, Enchanted Kingdom and SimEx!Iwerks Entertainment, the world's leader in motion simulators will release the new "Pirates 4D", the multi-million dollar 4D film that uses advanced digital sound, picture, and special effects to create a unique multi-sensory experience!

"Pirates 4D" guarantees 15 fun-packed minutes of rollicking adventure. Guests will be shipped to a Caribbean island where they join the funny misadventures of Captain Lucky played by Leslie Nielsen (Airplane!, Mr. Magoo, Harvey, Naked Gun, Naked Gun 2 1/2, the TV series "Police Squad"). Sharing the billing with Nielsen in Pirates is the equally-hilarious Eric Idle, the "matinee idol" of the motley Monty Python crew. Eric Idle is best remembered as the accident-prone cyclist in "National Lampoon's European Vacation." Idle also provided the voice of "Devon," half of the two-headed dragon in the Warner Bros animated hit, "Quest for Camelot."

With Captain Lucky and his crew on a quest for hidden treasure, "Pirates 4D" combines the latest 4-D special effects technology with multi-sensory theater effects. A 4D film combines 3D film with physical effects that occur in synchronization with the film, such as smoke, vibration, air blast, water spraying, 4D audio, heat, cold, lasers, and leg ticklers.

Before its premiere in the country, "Pirates 4D" has been an attraction at the Globe Theater, Luxor in Las Vegas, Thorpe Park in England, Phantasia Land in Germany and the sea-animal park Dolfinarium Harderwijk in Netherlands.

The audience joins Captain Lucky on a voyage that begins aboard a pirate ship in the Caribbean. Guests will find themselves laughing all the way as the Captain and his gang of buccaneers land on a remote island and begin searching for a pirate's buried treasure.

Unknown to Captain Lucky and his motley crew, a lad named Davey, marooned by the captain on the island a year ago, secretly waits, ready to foil their plans. Booby traps, snares, flying bats and more await the Captain and the voyagers. "Pirates 4D" combines the effervescent humor of the popular "Home Alone" series and the rollicking adventure of the blockbuster movie franchise, "Pirates of the Caribbean."

According to SimEx!Iwerks' special projects manager, Ron Pittman, who installed the various state-of-the-art enhancements to the 4D Discovery Theater of Enchanted Kingdom, guests are in for lots of surprises and new 4D experiences. Guests will experience sprays of water and other surprises during their adventure with the sea's most hapless and hopelessly band of bumblers. New control systems and HD server system were installed for the new effects and seat manipulations.

This viewing experience is also enhanced with a bigger projection screen, high-definition picture resolution, with four times as much detail on screen. The theater also uses Dolby 5.1 for optimum sound reproduction. Enchanted Kingdom, together with SimEx!Iwerks continue the development of new formats for its 4D Discovery Theater with the screen now three feet wider.

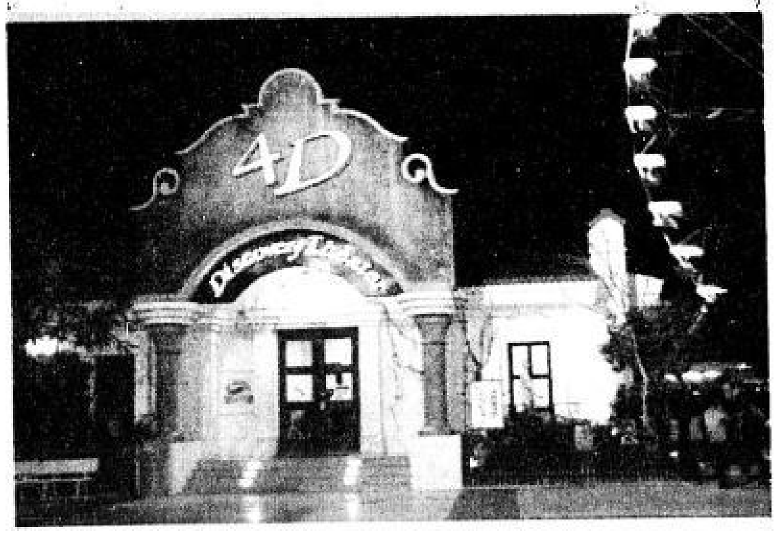
SimEx!Iwerks is the leading creator and developer of 3D, 4D-seat, FX, simulation, large format and custom special venue attractions, with 250 attractions installed in 30 countries. Simex!Iwerks attractions combine state-of-the-art digital and film technologies with innovative programming to create high impact E-ticket entertainments.

Catch "Pirates 4D" now at the Enchanted Kingdom's 4D Discovery Theater! Your whole family will be jumping out of your seats as you see, hear, and feel the action from this swashbuckling 4D film, guaranteed to take you to an adventure in a new dimension!

What's more, have your cameras ready as Captain Lucky and Davey, plus the members of the crew make their grand appearance for a Meet-and-Greet session with you at the 4D Discovery Theater entrance this summer! Snag their autographs, interact with them, and have a good time getting to know them! For the characters' complete meet and greet schedule, please inquire at the Park Relations Office or visit www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph. So come on over to Enchanted Kingdom and have a fun-filled summer with the whole family!

Starting March 26, Enchanted Kingdom will be open daily, Mondays to Fridays, from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. It closes on March 24, 31 and April 14, for private functions.

For tickets and other information, log on to www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph.



Enjoying summer without the hassle

GREAT! IT'S SUMMER TIME ONCE AGAIN. The perfect time for beaches, outdoor sports and tours. It's the ideal time for sending kids to camps and special classes as well.

However, while everyone loves having fun with the sun, it is during summer that mosquitoes most produce a whole new generation in just seven days. And these insects have been a constant annoyance. We've been probably irritated by mosquitoes while engaged in sporting activities, camping or even just watching TV at home. Worse, the bite may even result to diseases such as malaria, dengue, yellow fever or encephalitis that may threaten our lives. Great news! To protect ourselves and kids from mosquito bites, try the new Great Love Anti-Mosquito Wipes and enjoy the summer without the hassle. Great Love Anti-Mosquito Wipes is an effective protection against mosquitoes and other biting insects. Each sheet offers up to 6 hours of mosquito defense. Odor-free anti-mosquito protection, Great Love Anti-Mosquito Wipes gives a soft, smooth and comfortable feel to the skin. Easy to carry, and small enough to fit in the handbag or kikay kit. It is available in 7-11 outlets and all leading supermarkets nationwide. Great Love Anti-Mosquito Wipes is another quality product of GV Cosmetics Inc.

Pirates have invaded Enchanted Kingdom!
PIRATES 4D

So treat your senses and catch the latest 4D movie, Pirates, starring Leslie Nielsen and Eric Idle! Now showing this summer.

Park Schedule

March 26 – June 3	Mondays - Fridays	2:00 pm – 10:00 pm
	Saturdays & Sundays*	10:00 am – 10:00 pm
April 5 and 6	Maundy Thursday and Good Friday	Closed
April 7 (special non-working day)	Black Saturday*	10:00 am - 10:00 pm
April 9 (Araw ng Kagilingan)	Monday* (Holiday Rate)	2:00 pm – 10:00 pm
May 1 (Labor Day)	Tuesday* (Holiday Rate)	2:00 pm – 10:00 pm
May 14 (Election Day)	Monday* (Holiday Rate)	2:00 pm – 10:00 pm

*Fireworks display every Saturday, Sunday, and on Holidays.

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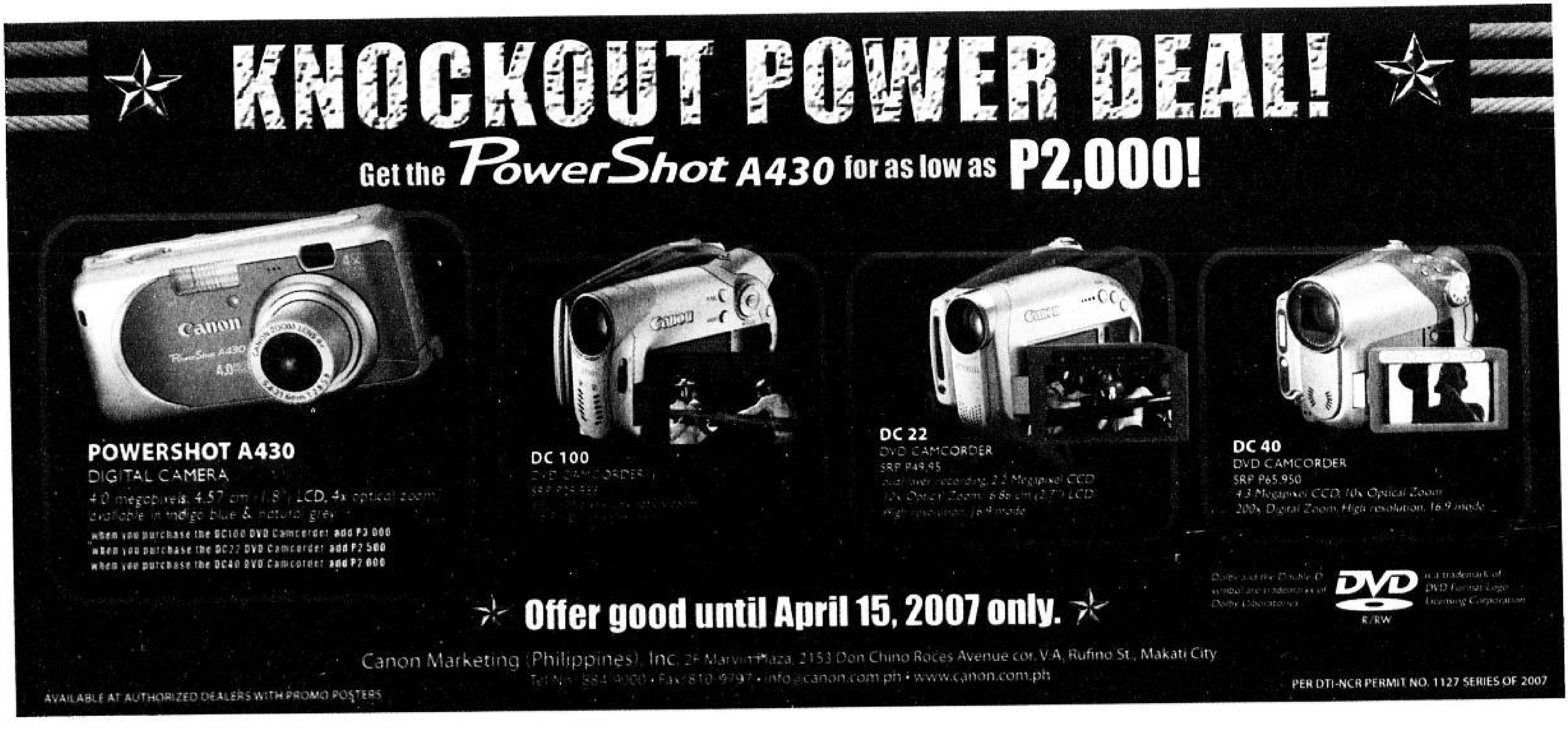

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The audience joins Captain Lucky on a voyage that begins aboard a pirate ship in the Caribbean. Guests will find themselves laughing all the way as the Captain and his gang of buccaneers land on a remote island and begin searching for a pirate's buried treasure.

Unknown to Captain Lucky and his motley crew, a lad named Davey, marooned by the captain on the island a year ago, secretly waits, ready to foil their plans. Booby traps, snares, flying bats and more await the Captain and the voyagers. "Pirates 4D" combines the effervescent humor of the popular "Home Alone" series and the rollicking adventure of the blockbuster movie franchise, "Pirates of the Caribbean."

According to SimEx!Iwerks' special projects manager, Ron Pittman, who installed the various state-of-the-art enhancements to the 4D Discovery Theater of Enchanted Kingdom, guests are in for lots of surprises and new 4D experiences. Guests will experience sprays of water and other surprises during their adventure with the sea's most hapless and hopelessly band of bumblers. New control systems and HD server system were installed for the new effects and seat manipulations.

This viewing experience is also enhanced with a bigger projection screen, high-definition picture resolution, with four times as much detail on screen. The theater also uses Dolby 5.1 for optimum sound reproduction. Enchanted Kingdom, together with SimEx!Iwerks continue the development of new formats for its 4D Discovery Theater with the screen now three feet wider.

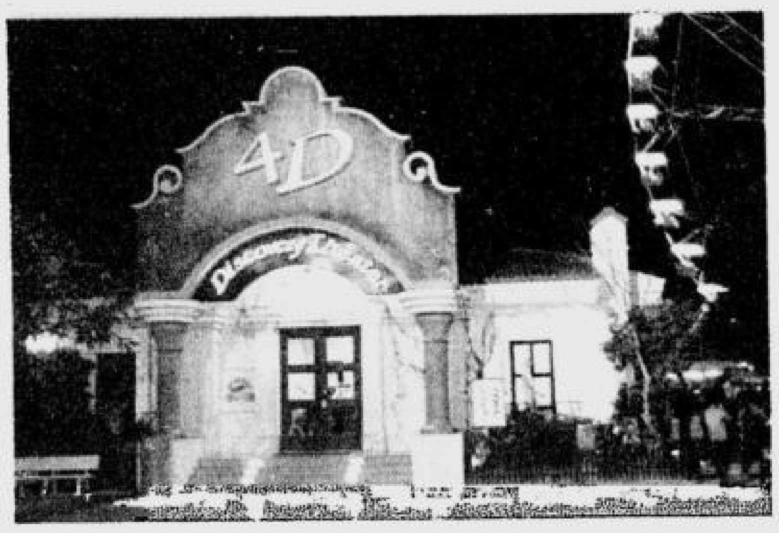
SimEx!Iwerks is the leading creator and developer of 3D, 4D-seat, FX, simulation, large format and custom special venue attractions, with 250 attractions installed in 30 countries. Simex!Iwerks attractions combine state-of-the-art digital and film technologies with innovative programming to create high impact E-ticket entertainments.

Catch "Pirates 4D" now at the Enchanted Kingdom's 4D Discovery Theater! Your whole family will be jumping out of your seats as you see, hear, and feel the action from this swashbuckling 4D film, guaranteed to take you to an adventure in a new dimension!

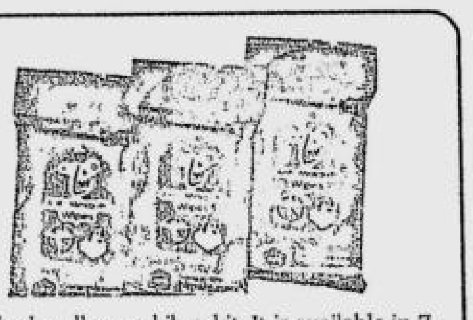
What's more, have your cameras ready as Captain Lucky and Davey, plus the members of the crew make their grand appearance for a Meet-and-Greet session with you at the 4D Discovery Theater entrance this summer! Snag their autographs, interact with them, and have a good time getting to know them! For the characters' complete meet and greet schedule, please inquire at the Park Relations Office or visit www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph. So come on over to Enchanted Kingdom and have a fun-filled summer with the whole family!

Starting March 26, Enchanted Kingdom will be open daily, Mondays to Fridays, from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. It closes on March 24, 31 and April 14, for private functions.

For tickets and other information, log on to www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph.



Enjoying summer without the hassle



GREAT! IT'S SUMMER TIME ONCE AGAIN. The perfect time for beaches, outdoor sports and tours. It's the ideal time for sending kids to camps and special classes as well.

However, while everyone loves having fun with the sun, it is during summer that mosquitoes most produce a whole new generation in just seven days. And these insects have been a constant annoyance. We've been probably irritated by mosquitoes while engaged in sporting activities, camping or even just watching TV at home. Worse, the bite may even result to diseases such as malaria, dengue, yellow fever or encephalitis that may threaten our lives. Great news! To protect ourselves and kids from mosquito bites, try the new Great Love Anti-Mosquito Wipes and enjoy the summer without the hassle. Great Love Anti-Mosquito Wipes is an effective protection against mosquitoes and other biting insects. Each sheet offers up to 6 hours of mosquito defense. Odor-free anti-mosquito protection, Great Love Anti-Mosquito Wipes gives a soft, smooth and comfortable feel to the skin. Easy to carry, and small enough to fit in the handbag or kikay kit. It is available in 7-11 outlets and all leading supermarkets nationwide. Great Love Anti-Mosquito Wipes is another quality product of GV Cosmetics Inc.

Pirates have invaded Enchanted Kingdom!

PIRATES 4D

So treat your senses and catch the latest 4D movie, Pirates, starring Leslie Nielsen and Eric Idle! Now showing this summer.

Park Schedule

March 26 – June 3	Mondays - Fridays	2:00 pm – 10:00 pm
	Saturdays & Sundays*	10:00 am – 10:00 pm
April 5 and 6	Maundy Thursday and Good Friday	Closed
April 7 (special non-working day)	Black Saturday*	10:00 am - 10:00 pm
April 9 (Araw ng Kagitingan)	Monday* (Holiday Rate)	2:00 pm – 10:00 pm
May 1 (Labor Day)	Tuesday* (Holiday Rate)	2:00 pm – 10:00 pm
May 14 (Election Day)	Monday* (Holiday Rate)	2:00 pm – 10:00 pm

*Fireworks display every Saturday, Sunday, and on Holidays.

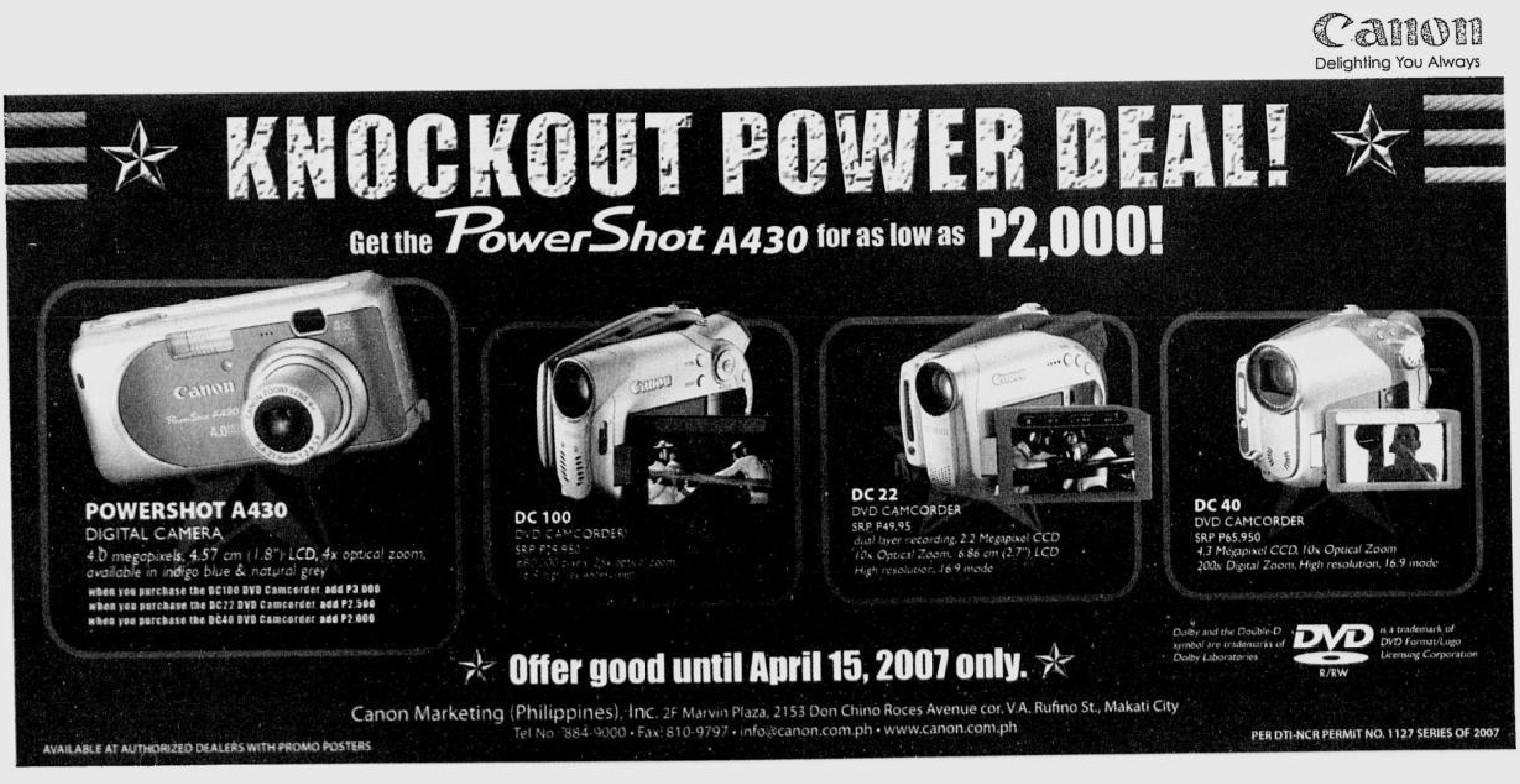
Enchanted Kingdom™

The magic stays with you.

Park Address: San Lorenzo South, City of Santa Rosa, Laguna • Tel. No: 843 60 74 to 78 Makati Sales Office: Ground Floor, The Biltmore Condominium, 102 Aguirre St. Legaspi Village, Makati City. Tel. No. 830-2[illegible] to 16

IAAPA

Website:www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph • Email: eldarthewizard@enchantedkingdom.com.ph



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RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

Summer is a time of infinite possibilities. To make sure that you enjoy each and every moment in comfort and style, **SM Department Store** is showcasing its summer fashion must-haves – all inspired by the season's varied activities.

To achieve that outdoor chic, give yourself a signature look with interesting textures, new colors and tasteful accessories that appear effortlessly put together.

SUMMER FASHION!
Get the look
white linen halter
pearl earrings
2-piece tie dye set
pearl necklace
woven handbag
multi-strand pearl bracelet
low-heeled thong slippers
drawstring pants
woven sun hat
chunky bangles
casual florals
2-piece jersey beach wear
blue thong slippers
wrap-around with fringes

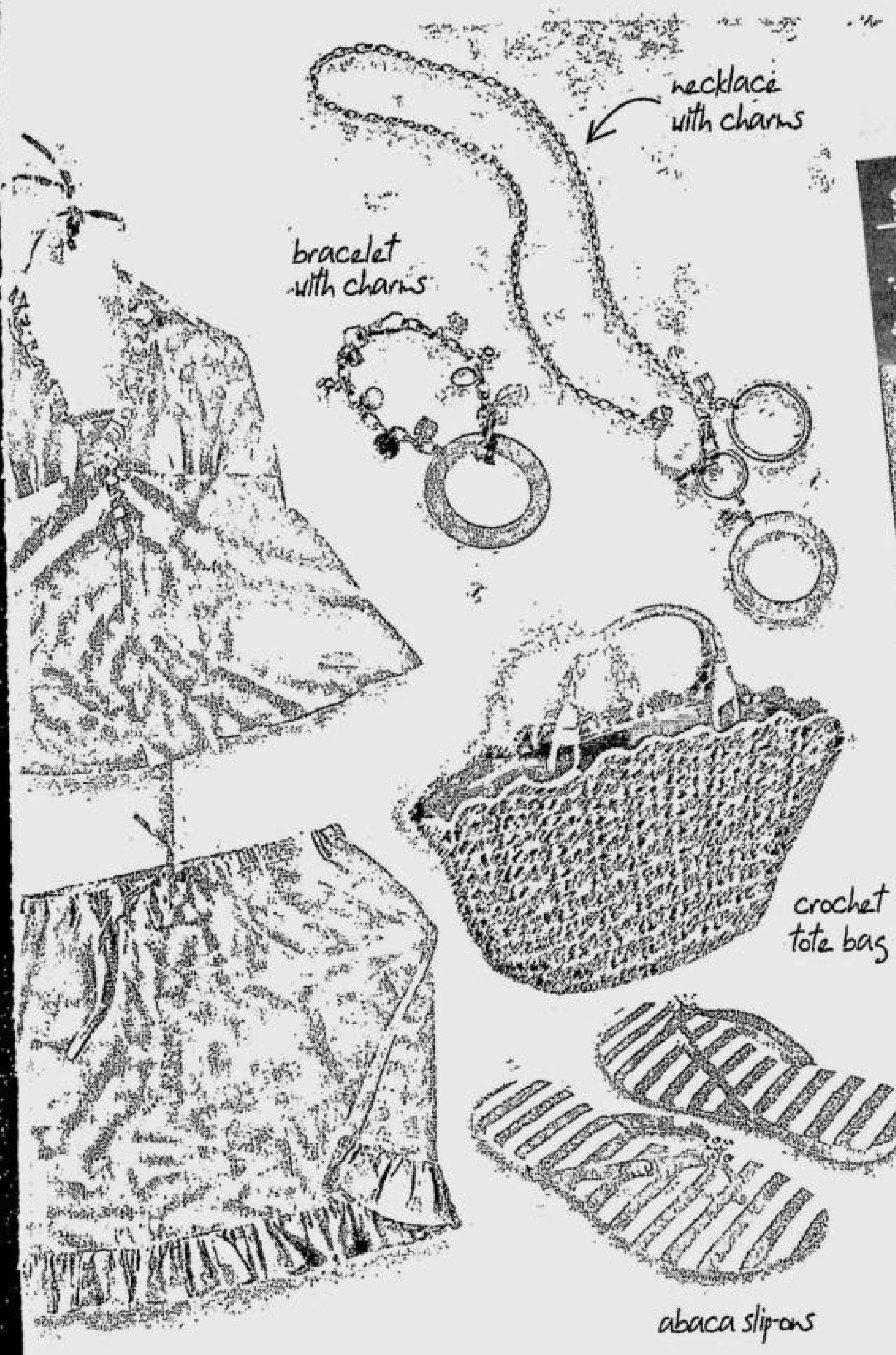
*Colors may vary from actual items.
Representations of March and April collections

Available at the Ladies' Wear, Accessories, Bags & Shoes Departments

Makati • Cubao • Harrison • North Edsa • Sta. Mesa • Ortigas • Las Piñas • Bacoor • Fairview • Manila • Pampanga • Mandurriao • Cebu • Davao • Cagayan De Oro •

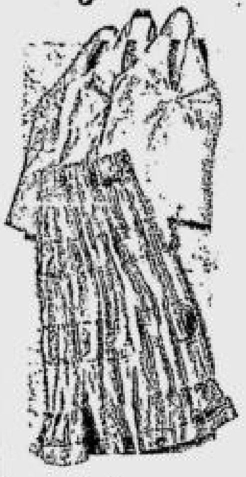
Summer fashion

Get the look at SM DEPARTMENT STORE


necklace with charms
bracelet with charms
crochet tote bag
abaca slip-ons

colorific tie-dye

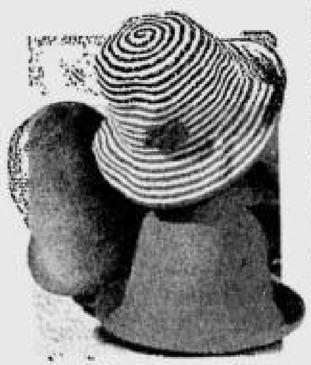
putting it all together



The season's prettiest trends favor immaculate wear-anywhere whites touched up with special detailings. Also in style are vivid tie-dye ensembles, aqua blue bikini sets and sarongs embellished with bohemian fringes, and breezy, floral dresses that you can wear with a stylish flair.

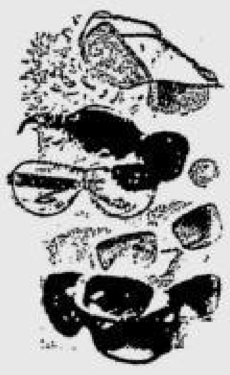
trendy accessories

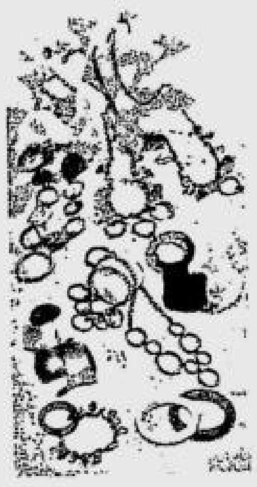
The vast array of accessories available at SM Department Store make it so much easier for you to enhance your summer look with these elegant pieces.



Hide from the heat under the wide and wavy rim of a sophisticated sun hat or behind the visor of a sporty summer cap.

Besides providing protection from the harmful effects of the sun's rays, sunglasses draw attention to your features, so choose a pair that fits the proportion of your face. Visit the SM Ladies' Accessories Department for the sunglasses that's just right for your summer look.



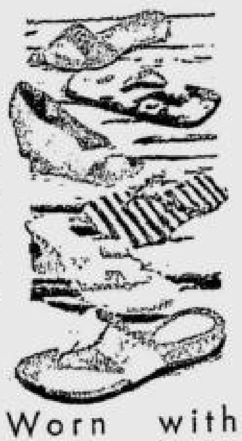


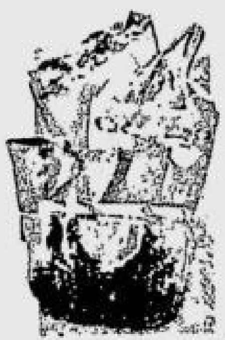
Chunky bangles, strings of lustrous pearls, chains of dangling neckwear and matching bracelets, scarves, and belts add style to your summer wardrobe.

feet & bag fashion

Where you are going and what you will be doing determine your choice of summer footwear. For the city dweller out to catch some sun, the trendiest feet fashion are over at the SM Ladies' Shoes Department.

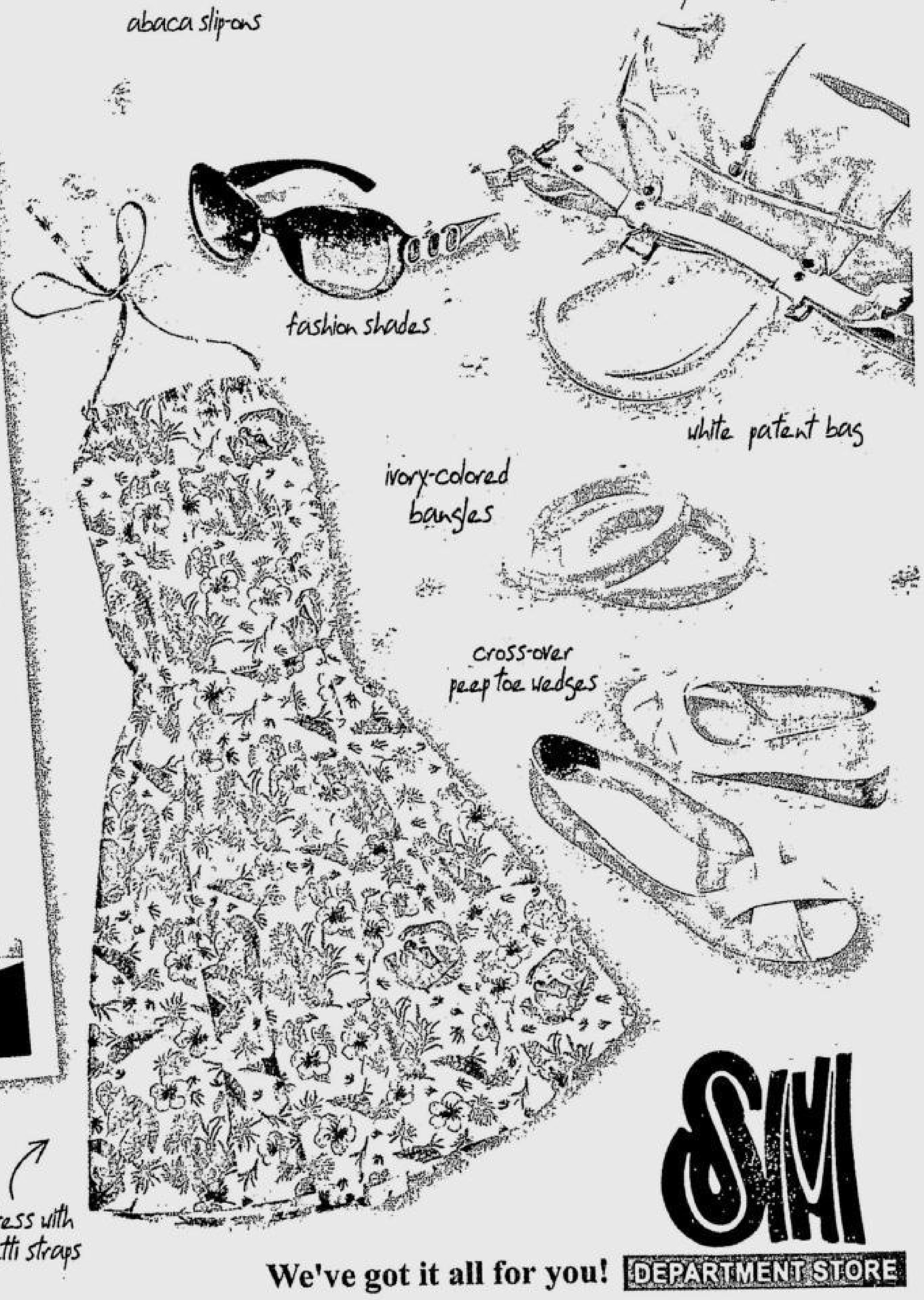
Flats are in this summer. So are low-heeled sandals and wedges. Their smart wearability makes them look great with any length of skirt or dress.





Worn with matching bags, these wardrobe staples give a smart headstart on those sunshine days and balmy evenings.

Glam yourself up for a relaxing season. Visit the SM Department Store nearest you and take your pick from the store's summer fashion collection.


fashion shades
white patent bag
ivory-colored bangles
cross-over peep toe wedges
sun dress with spaghetti straps

SM

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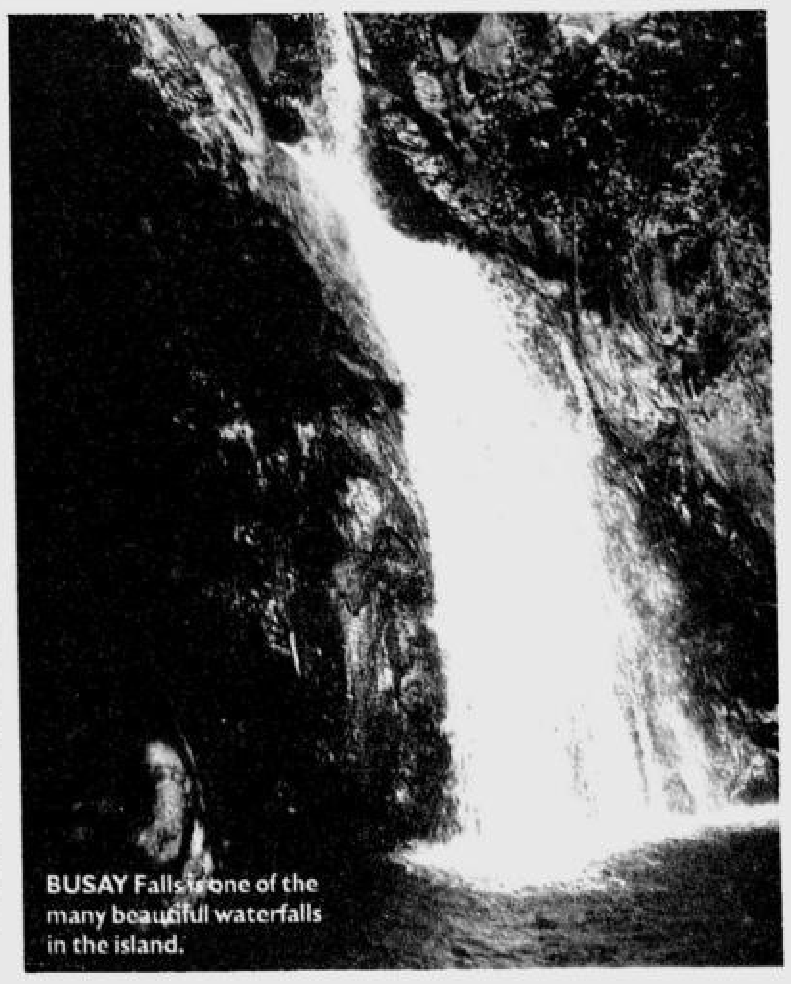
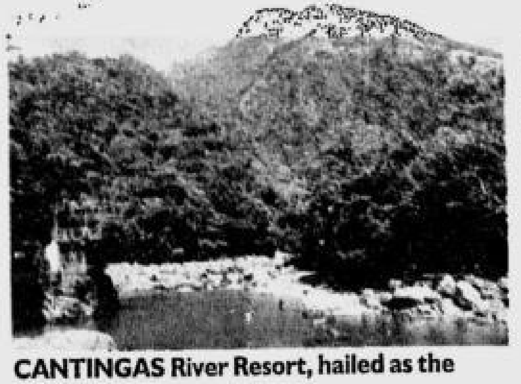
UNEXPLORED PLACE

Simply rustic Sibuyan Island


BUSAY Falls is one of the many beautiful waterfalls in the island.

AT Cresta de Gallo Island


CANTINGAS River Resort, hailed as the Philippines' cleanest river.

ROMBLON Port at the break of dawn.

Text and photos by Joel V. Nigos

SIBUYAN ISLAND MAY NOT A ring a bell unless perhaps it is associated with its mother province. A crescent-shaped island and one of the three biggest in Romblon, it is believed to have lived with its isolation from the rest of the world since its birth. It has also been dubbed by some local and international natural scientists as the Galapagos of Asia because of its biodiversity and the numerous endemic plant and animal species living there.

I recently paid a visit to Sibuyan and have discovered some exciting surprises.

We left Manila late in the afternoon via MBRS for an overnight travel to Romblon. Our first stop upon daybreak was Romblon City, a small port town and capital of Romblon province. From the harbor, we had a good view of the ruins of two forts - San Andres and Santiago - twin Spanish forts constructed out of coral blocks and bricks between 1644 and 1573. These forts provide a vantage view of the town at 156 feet above sea level. These sentinels of bygone era once served as protection of the town against Moro raiders and Dutch pirates. Today, Fort San Andres is being used as a weather station. The forts are also said to have underground passages leading to the coast. From the town, old Spanish style houses can also be noticed.

The Romblon harbor offers a perfect shelter for sea vessels since the Spanish times. Lying off the bay is a sunken galleon and the wreck of a Japanese battleship.

After this short stop, our boat proceeded to Sibuyan Island, our ultimate destination. It has three quaint fishing towns namely San Fernando, Cajidiocan and Magdiwang. The biggest among the three towns is San Fernando, which is traversed by high and steep mountain ranges covered with thick and verdant forests. It has an irregular coastline with long white sandy beaches.

Unexplored

The island is unexplored and dominated by Mt. Guiting Guiting (literally means "the saw-toothed mountain").

Home to a myriad of plants and animals, it is the highest peak in Romblon at 2,057 meters. It is considered to be among the more formidable mountains in the country. Its rugged terrain presents several challenges to professional mountaineers and climbers who scale it before reaching its peak. This mountain straddles the three towns of Sibuyan. Its summit is said to provide a magnificent view of the entire island and the nearby Romblon Island and Marinduque.

After indulging in our hearty breakfast and upon check-in, we proceeded with the tour. A short trek led us to Busay Falls, a towering pristine cascading water amid a thick foliage of green surroundings. A scenic spot with natural pool and is about 2.5 kilometers from the town proper. The upper portion is the water reservoir serving the town with its water requirement. Since the island is rich in mineral resources like marble, chrome and nickel, glitter in the soil especially along trekking routes are highly noticeable.

Busay is just one of the many beautiful waterfalls in the island. It also has clean rivers teeming with fishes and shrimps.

Cleanest river

Our picnic lunch was served at Cantingas River Resort (hailed as the cleanest inland body of water in the Philippines) where guests can take a cool dip or fish in its emerald green clear water.

In the afternoon, we proceeded to Come Christ in the Mountain, another waterfall but this time it is where an image of Christ seemed to be etched, thus, the name.

Dinner was served at beachfront at Olango which featured houses of German nationals who have chosen Sibuyan to be their transient or permanent home.

The large community of German nationals in the island who had built their vacation homes along the coast is surprising. Those who come here three to four times a year have opened their homes to visitors for a daily rental fee if they are not around. While others had already opted to retire in this serene and rustic island they call paradise.

Accommodations in this quaint island are simple and basic - mostly inns, hostels or home stay. All of us stayed in the town of San Fernando.

On our second day, we were brought to Cresta de Gallo (rooster comb) Island, an uninhabited island with two hills and powdery sand beach surrounded by coral reefs luxuriant with diverse marine life species and well-known for its excellent diving and snorkeling areas.

There was a little drizzle when we reached the island but it did not prevent us from exploring it. Some went fishing while the others snorkeled. I simply took a dip then joined the rest who gathered around an improvised grill cooking fishes caught in the area.

Biodiversity

Sibuyan has been declared as a natural park by President Fidel Ramos because of the diversity of flora and fauna and all the other things that can only be found in the island.

San Fernando Mayor Dindo Rios shares that his town alone has 24 rivers, lakes and waterfalls.

"Sibuyan has been declared as having the densest forest in the world," he says. In one study, the National Museum identified 1,551 trees in a single hectare, 54 are found nowhere else in the world. The hardest tree in the world, the iron wood, is also traced in the island. There are also around 700 vascular plant species on the island, including Nepenthes sibuyanensis, which is endemic as its scientific name suggests.

"We have 136 kinds of bird here, 26 of them migratory. We have a rare bird in the island which has 14 colors. We also have discovered five frogs without names yet and which make them endemic. The cleanest inland body of water, the Cantingas River, is also in Sibuyan," he adds.

Getting there

Getting to Sibuyan may be daunting but the rewards are more than enough compensation. From Manila, it can be reached by boat via MBRS which leaves Pier 8 at 5 p.m. every Wednesday and picks up passengers in Sibuyan on a Friday at 5 p.m. The other route is through Batangas port but it passes Masbate first before going back to Batangas port.

The accommodation on board is simple and basic with small air-conditioned cabins (capacity of four) and deluxe aircon (with 100 people in the room) on double-deck beds plus the regular economy class. There are four restaurant outlets on board where passengers can eat.

The trip is just overnight. The boat arrives at Romblon Port first at the break of dawn to bring down passengers before proceeding to Sibuyan Island, about three hours away. The port of Sibuyan is Cajidiocan.

In the major islands of Sibuyan, Tablas and Romblon, the predominant means of transportation are jeepneys and tricycles. The former are often used for transport between towns while the latter are used mainly within the town proper. Tricycles can also be used for out-of-town trips in the event passenger jeepneys are not available. Transport between nearby islands or islets are by outrigger boats.

Island Caravan offers packaged trips to Sibuyan Island, Romblon and to other destinations throughout the country. For inquiries call 896-1910, 896-1893, 0920-9075672 or log on to www.islandcaravan.com.

Encenada Beach Resort hosts annual reggae festival

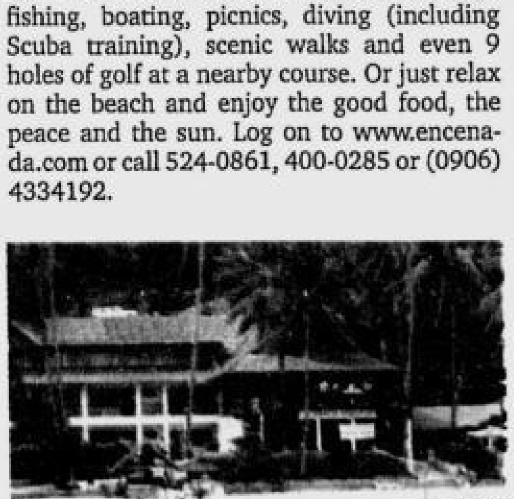
THE PUERTO GALERA REGGAE FESTIVAL, an annual event hosted by Encenada Beach Resort since 2004, comes alive again this Easter Sunday, April 8.

This year's edition would cast Tropical Depression, CocoJam and Rubadub. Reggae Mistress would add more energy to the rhythm of the island while local reggae artists from Puerto Galera are also expected to grace the event. Previous reggae festivals had featured Brownbeat Allstars with Scarlet, Jun Lopito, Tropical Depression, Coffee Break Island, CocoJam, Jeepney Joy Ride, and Rubadub, to name a few.

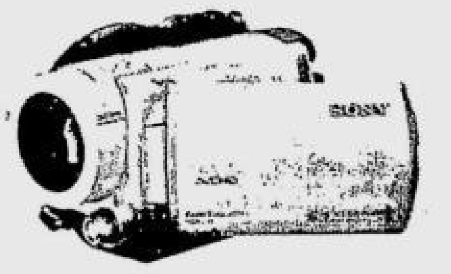
Encenada management said that they decided to push through with the reggae fest this year after getting inspiration from the coming live performances at the Philippine Plaza poolside of Ziggy Marley, the eldest son of the late, great reggae artist Bob Marley.

Event sponsors are GSM Blue and Matador Brandy with the help of Jack n' Jill Fun Snacks and official FM radio stations JAM 88.3 and NU 107.

Encenada Beach Resort boasts of 40 rooms, a bar and restaurant, powdery sand, and lots of sunshine. A quiet resort set in a private cove not far from the main town and night life, you can enjoy magnificent views of the beach from its restaurant deck, or dive and snorkel at the coral gardens just meters away from the beachfront. You can also arrange fishing, boating, picnics, diving (including Scuba training), scenic walks and even 9 holes of golf at a nearby course. Or just relax on the beach and enjoy the good food, the peace and the sun. Log on to www.encenada.com or call 524-0861, 400-0285 or (0906) 4334192.



Capture memories of summer '07 in full high-definition

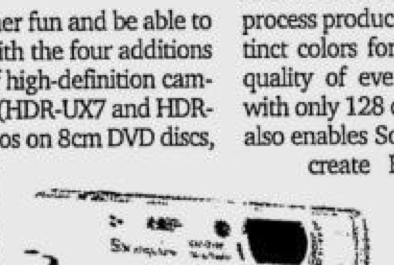


WE ALL HAVE FOND MEMORIES OF summers that passed. And oh, how we wish that we had captured everything in all their splendour and greatness. Now, we can put these regrets behind as the second wave of the high definition (HD) revolution hits the Philippine shores, and with it comes more HD-integrated products that promise enhanced audio-visual capture, viewing and sharing prowess - unparalleled innovations that can be provided only by the world's leader in electronic products - Sony.

Indeed, Sony has outdone itself once again with the introduction of new HD Cyber-shot cameras and HD Handycam camcorders. Snap, print and view images in full HD with the latest Cyber-shot T-Series, W-Series and H-Series models. Likewise, shoot, view and print in full HD with Sony's newest AVCHD and HDV format Handycams. Produced by the leader and pioneer in HD and equipped with Sony's trademark technologies, expect these new HD products to go beyond the usual picture-taking and video-making experience and achieve superiority that befits their status as items belonging to the new and improved Sony HD World.

Capture those rare and precious summer moments where they happen, as they happen, with the new HD Cyber-shot cameras empowered by Sony's Bionz technology. Take photos like a pro with the latest additions to Sony T-Series (T100 and T20), W-Series (W90 and W80) and H-series (H9 and H7) models.

Catch all the summer fun and be able to relive them forever with the four additions to Sony's collection of high-definition camcorders: two AVCHD (HDR-UX7 and HDR-UX5) that record videos on 8cm DVD discs, and two HDV (HDR-HC7 and HDR-HC5) that record on miniDV tapes. The four new models incorporate useful features such as the Super SteadyShot optical image stabilization that efficiently reduces blur and allows stable shooting for both video and still images.



Only Sony can claim superiority in HD, as no one else can provide holistic solutions of snap, shoot, view and print in full high definition. Immerse yourself in wave after wave of intense HD experience whichever bend and corner of the world you may be. View your HD photos and videos right after you take them on the models' large LCD screens. Or print them in a jiffy with Sony's portable printers that use a unique dye-sublimation technology to ensure continuous color tone for each print. This printing process produces more than 16 million distinct colors for each pixel, surpassing the quality of even the highest-quality print with only 128 distinct colors per pixel. This also enables Sony Digital Photo Printers to create HD-quality, beautiful vivid color prints. The new Handycam models also allow for precise grabbing of frames from videos and printing them in HD quality, hence, objects that were captured in motion will not appear blurred or obscured. And if you have a Sony Bravia HD television sitting pretty in your living room, images and videos taken from a trip will become a major viewing spectacle when you see these memories played back on your large LCD screen.

Take pride in the Filipino summer experience. The sights, jubilant atmosphere and more importantly, the people you spend it with will make this season once in a lifetime and definitely worth remembering.

For more information on Sony HD products, call Sony's Customer Contact Center at 878-7600 or 0917-8077669, email them at info.sph@ap.sony.com, or visit their website www.sony.com.ph. Sony HD products would be available in Sony Squares, Digital Solutions Plazas, and Sony authorized dealers nationwide.

"See, Feel, and Relive Reality" with Sony's HD World gadgets and get the chance to win a trip for two to New Zealand and other exciting prizes by joining the Add True Colors to Your World HD Text Raffle promo. Catch Sony's Summer Pleasures 2007 nationwide promo and exhibits that will run from March 16 to June 3. Call Sony's Customer Contact Center to check out exhibit schedules at the mall nearest you.

Prana Medi Spa gets you the ultra (bikini) shape this summer

THE PRANA MEDI SPA AT CLUB ULTIMA, FUENTE Cebu and Crown Regency Mactan shows you how to redefine your physique and get into the best beach body shape this summer and all year long! The Prana Medi Spa has just added the Ultrashape among its top-of-the-line equipment. Ultrashape's body promises are lean legs, firm flat abs, and shapelier hips. In other words, you can get into the best shape of your life without making a single incision on your body.

Doctors say that the formation of fat clots or blood clots, which may migrate to the lungs, may cause a liposuction treatment to go awry. The Ultrashape junks all these fears. Since it is non-invasive, the Ultrashape destroys the fat cells in targeted areas like the stomach and thighs. How does Ultrashape do this? In a nutshell, ultrasound waves go through the fat and break these up into glycerol and free fatty acids. These are drained though the body's natural mechanisms as urine and sweat. Ultrashape is ideal for those with problematic waists, love handles and thighs.

The costs of using the Ultrashape at other fitness and wellness centers however may hold you back. That is if you get the Ultrashape treatment other than in Prana Medi Spa. Other fitness centers or establishments offer the Ultrashape for as much as 54,000 per session or a total of P212,000 for the ideal four-session program! That's too high a price to pay for vanity.

But here's the good news. Prana Medi Spa allows you get unmatched value when it launches its Ultrashape Bikini Body Program this summer. As an initial offering, Club Ultima members can get the first trial session with the Ultrashape for only P25,000, while an entire four-treatment package will cost P80,000. That's a whopping P120,000 savings compared to what other fitness centers have to offer. To sweeten the fitness pie even more, Prana Medi Spa will give the first 50 clients who will sign up for the Ultrashape Bikini Body Program two free sessions at the Dyna-med and Body Wrapping which easily costs more than P5,000! There are also other several procedures at Club Ultima's Prana Medi Spa that complement this non-surgical alternative to aesthetic surgery procedure.

Prana Medi Spa is located at the 10th Floor of Crown Regency Suites and Villas, Mactan and at the Wellness Center, 16th Floor of Club Ultima, Fuente Boulevard, and Cebu City. For more information about the Ultrashape Bikini Body Program at Prana, call (032)418-777 and 341-4586.

'Love Luzon': Rediscover the country's northern sights today

THE HECTIC URBAN LIFESTYLE OF Metro Manila can make it easy to forget that you are only hours away from amazing tourist spots. Going a little farther north into Luzon can lead you to world-class resorts and convention centers, exciting surfing beaches, and picturesque heritage sites.

Road trip apprehensions are a thing of the past now that travel to the North is a lot easier. Improved road networks have cut travel time considerably, and gas stations have transformed themselves into attractive pit stops offering good food and other conveniences. You could even opt not to drive as more comfortable bus rides become available at reasonable rates.

For beaches and dive spots, one could go to Zambales. The province, famous for Subic Bay, offers weekend fun for the whole family in attractions such as Ocean Adventure, Zoobic, nature parks and duty-free shopping. The north also makes a fine destination to revisit the country's past. One could drive into Ilocos Sur and visit its capital city Vigan, a Unesco heritage site known for its colonial architecture and historical significance. National landmarks such as the centuries-old Sta. Maria Church and Tirad Pass stand here as well.

For nature lovers, a visit to Cagayan Valley means enjoying an ecotourism expedition, seeing the best of the region's caves and mountains. Pangasinan's Hundred Islands are a beachgoer and photographer's dream, and the beaches along La Union's coastline are ideal spots for your first surfing lesson. Hiking shoes would come in handy for a trip to the world-renowned Banaue Rice Terraces and Sagada (which should be on every young hiker's list of accomplishments).

"Imagine, the Banaue Rice Terraces are 2,000 years old -- and they're just hours away from us," said Patrick Gregorio, executive director of the North Philippines Visitors Bureau (NPVB). "And it's just one of many places to travel to if people want to enjoy a long break."

The NPVB, a non-profit corporation, has events and other activities underway to bring attention to what Luzon's northern regions can offer to tourists and business travelers. It sees the North as a convention and event destination and through the Conventions and Visitors Bureaus (CVB) in every province makes this a reality. In fact, it has began efforts to drum up exciting tourism-related activities in Clark, Greater Subic in Zambales, SBMA, Bataan and Olongapo, Tarlac, Baguio, Cagayan North, and Pangasinan.

Gregorio enthused, "We are looking into organizing more creative festivities. In the coming months, we will hold the Ninoy Cup-The Philippine Inter collegiate Debating Championships, the Philippine Basketball Association All-Star games and a Digital Photo contest and exhibit, among others. We have touch based with other organizations to make things happen. We are really committed (with the CVB members) to work together to aggressively promote the North."

A big component of this significant goal is the ease of traveling to North Luzon. Victory Liner, one of the country's premier bus companies, has stepped up and aided this campaign by focusing on domestic tourism in its marketing. It has introduced luxury buses in its routes to North Luzon provinces, bringing a new level of comfort and convenience to the bus traveler's experience.

Gregorio noted participation of private companies into the NPVB efforts has been encouraging, "It is great that Victory Liner adopted tourism as part of its marketing campaign. Now, we are confident more tourists (regular commuters and season travelers) will realize the convenience of travel to the North especially so aboard the Victory Liner's new de luxe buses."

He added that now is the time to take advantage of the improved road networks in the North, "We are not saying not to go to Cebu, Davao or Boracay but for people to visit the beautiful places in the North."

On your next vacation weekend, put some of Luzon's many attractions on your itinerary -- NPVB and Victory Liner are working together to make you rediscover your love for Luzon. For bus reservations, visit any Victory Liner terminal or call their dedicated customer service hotline at 0917-VICLINE (8425463).

THE world-renowned Banaue Rice Terraces remains a sight to behold.

'Where do you want to go this summer?'

THIS IS THE TYPICAL QUESTION everyone asks their families and friends during this time of the year. I'm sure you're thinking about going back to one of your all-time favori te destinations like Boracay, Baguio, or Cebu. Perhaps you haven't explored Bohol, Palawan or Davao and want to know what all the fuzz is about. In your very own Philippines, the choices for your well-deserved summer vacation are endless. But is it already too late to get a great deal?

No need to worry, as there is now a service geared to helping you find that perfect summer destination!

Philippine Hotel Reservations Service or PHRS, for short, is the first and only Central Hotel Reservations Service for domestic travelers in the country. Their team of expert and knowledgeable Travel Consultants is trained to help guests pick and choose hotels and resorts all over the Philippines based on price, quality and service offerings.

So you may be wondering, how does this work? If you are the typical Pinoy traveler, the first thing you would do is call up those places you are familiar with. Or you ask around for recommendations, and then you would call different hotels and resorts one by one. Not ideal, right? Why? Firstly, you may miss out on those great new places that have opened recently which you know nothing about. Secondly, it is a cumbersome task of doing everything on your own… after countless and expensive long-distance calls and unreturned inquiries you may still be without a concrete summer vacation plan. And lastly, did you know that the local resident rate quoted to you when calling the hotel is not always the best deal available? Look no further!

PHRS has a listing of more than 300 Hotels and Resorts all over the Philippines that serves the local traveler -- for all tastes and budgets, from individuals, couples, big families, barkadas and groups to last minute leisure and corporate travelers. In addition, they make it their top priority to look for new and exciting places and destinations to explore within the Philippines. Their slogan "cheaper than calling hotel directly" is not taken lightly by the proprietors Lila Marquez-Rosenberger and Björn Rosenberger. "Our prices are almost always significantly lower than calling the hotels directly. We always try to beat the lowest price offered by the hotel whenever possible," according to Lila who is responsible for managing the company's call center.

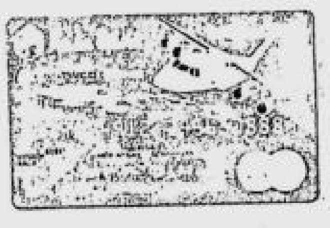
Along with this low price strategy, you are treated to the highest level of personal and friendly customer service. Above all, their "no cost" travel consultation ensures that you get the best recommendations without hidden mark-ups or padded fees to stay at one of their preferred properties.

So what are you waiting for? Explore and enjoy your summer vacation with your loved ones thru PHRS. For reservations, call the PHRS reservations hotline at 812-PHRS (7477) open daily starting at 9 a.m. For more info, please visit their website: www.phrs.com.ph.

Beach Hut's new products for summer

NATURALE LABS, creators of Beach Hut Clear Spray Sunblock, introduces three new products this summer. Beach Hut Max with SPF 75++ (150ml, P495) - the only clear spray sunblock with the highest SPF in the market. Beach Hut Hair and Scalp Clear Spray Sunblock (140ml, P549) - the first and only hair and scalp sunblock, has an alcohol-free formula that protects your hair from sun damage, keeping your hair soft and moisturized even as you bask in the sun or take a dip in the ocean. Beach Hut One Touch Continuous Clear Spray Sunblock (177ml, P619) - is an aerosol sunblock with a continuous-spray dispensing system. The new sunblock line is available in Rustan's Department Store, Mercury Drug, Nothing But Water, Watson's, Chocolate Stoked and SM Department Store. For more information on Beach Hut, go to www.lotionsucks.com.

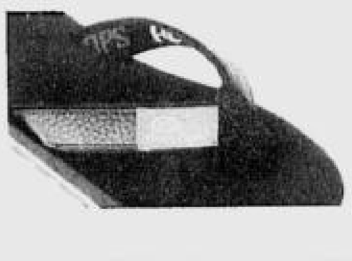
East West Bank launches 'Vacation Card'



EAST WEST BANK HAS COLLABORATED with Asian Spirit and MasterCard to introduce the ideal "vacation card" - the Asian Spirit East West Bank MasterCard. This new co-brand card presents a wide array of travel offerings topped off by discounts on Asian Spirit domestic fares and on room rates and meals from resorts and establishments in Boracay and other vacation destinations. With its amazing privileges, the new Asian Spirit East West Bank MasterCard definitely helps cardholders achieve the best vacation experiences.

Have a happy summer with Happy Feet!

ALL ROADS WILL SOON LEAD to summer and what better way to enjoy summer if not with the Happy Feet Summer Bundle! Happy Feet's Summer Bundle lets Happy Feet lovers spend summer decked out in Happy Feet footwear. Wooden sandals are the perfect footwear to keep our lovely feet cool and comfy as the season sizzles. And, when out on the pool or the beach, Happy Feet slippers are the perfect waterproof companions to protect your feet from the hot sand, concrete or from germs at common showers. Every purchase of a regular-priced pair of Happy Feet wooden sandals gives customers a chance to avail a pair of Happy Feet Stride, Happy Feet Bounce, or Happy Feet Hip Flops for only P99. That's a whole lot of savings and a whole lot of fun for your feet this summer. Rush on to the nearest Happy Feet store to get your own Happy Feet Summer Bundle. Offer is good all summer. For more info, contact Happy Feet stores at San Juan (Wilson cor. P. Guevarra, tel. no. 726-5393), Glorietta Makati (tel. no. 818-6716) Robinsons Place Cainta (Ground Floor, tel. no. 656-8028), Pavilion Mall in Biñan, Laguna (tel. no. 049-411-3181), Robinsons Galleria (3rd Floor, tel. no. 633-2739), Festival Supermall in Alabang and University Mall in Taft Avenue (tel. no. 411-3181). In Cagayan, contact 0917-522-9115, Davao/Cebu contact 0918-9251168 and in Bacolod contact 0917-8871171. Happy Feet Sandals are also available at leading SM Department Stores. E-mail queries@happyfeetsandals.com for inquiries.



A healthy summer glow

SKIN COLOR ENHANCEMENT continues to be a strong trend. In fact, US consumers spend twice as much on skin color enhancement then on teeth whitening. The experts from the Jergens brand have again, through science and innovation, created a body moisturizer that is the first of its kind. Jergens natural glow daily moisturizer works by combining a unique blend of luxurious moisturizers, custom color activators and natural botanicals, including olive oil, avocado oil, and oatmeal extract to give your skin a kiss of luster. The glycerin in Jergens natural glow daily moisturizer works to retain moisture to create a more radiant appearance and leaves your skin soft and smooth with every use. Erythrulose, DHA and light diffusers work together to subtly enhance and gradually deepen the color of skin; resulting in a natural-looking summer glow without having to add to your daily beauty routine.

Jergens natural glow daily moisturizer is the first and only mass market body lotion to contain Erythrulose, a skin color enhancing ingredient; which slowly develops providing a natural tone, preventing streaking and providing a higher quality of color (no orange coloration). Erythrulose absorbs more deeply, and works gradually compared to DHA, creating an even skin tone. The DHA develops quickly for a noticeable change in skin tone within a few days. The unique combination of the DHA and the Erythrulose, creates a subtle skin darkening effect, while the light diffusers provide a delicate shimmer adding to the natural glow of the product. If used for one to two weeks, Jergens natural glow daily moisturizer will darken your skin by one full shade. With the gradual effect of Jergens natural glow daily moisturizer, you will have moisturized, even-toned, more radiant skin year round.

Jergens natural glow daily moisturizer allows you to obtain a preferable glow while moisturizing, making it one easy beauty regimen you will want to maintain. This no-mess moisturizer will not leave stains or residue on clothing. Additionally, it will not wash off in the shower. Jergens natural glow daily moisturizer fits into your existing beauty routine and gives pampering moisturization as well as the added bonus of a touch of color all year long. Because skin is continuously exfoliating, daily use of Jergens natural glow daily moisturizer results in a slightly heightened skin color that stays even all the time, without the fading and overt darkening of a self tanner.

Big waves hit CME Central!

THIS SUMMER, CLUB MANILA East Taytay (CME Central) gives you another reason to come and delight in the various fun-filled activities and facilities the resort offers as it opens its newest water attraction in the resort, CME BeachWaves.

Play, ride the waves, and body surf at CME BeachWaves. Experience a day at the beach without going for that long drive and getting sand in your ears and clothes. Come with your family, your barkada, or your officemates, brave the big waves in the deep end or play with the ripples in the shallow shore.

CME BeachWaves is a 19,000 square foot giant wave pool, bigger than four basketball courts combined. It gradually deepens like a beach towards a maximum depth of 6 feet and it can produce up to eight wave patterns of up to 4 feet high. Specially trained lifeguards are present to secure everybody's safety.

CME Central is a seven-hectare business and leisure complex with seventy air-conditioned and fully furnished villas that are available for overnight accommodations or for long stays. The thirty Don Renato Garden Villas provide a perfect retreat for couples that want some quiet moments alone to rekindle that old spark in their marriage. The forty Doña Luz Hillsview Villas provide groups like families and barkadas affordable accommodations as they spend recreational bonding time together. Overnight accommodations are available for as low as P2,900.

Opening also this summer is the CME Easy River and the Team Building Outdoor Facility. Go easy and relax with the CME Easy River or feel the rush and excitement of physical activity with the Team Building Outdoor Facility complete with wall climbing and obstacles courses for everyone.

Other than CME BeachWaves and CME Easy River, it also boasts of six other water facilities namely: the Kiddie Pool with waterfalls and fountains, Adult Pool with a giant 3-looped slide, Boating Area for kayaking, the Lap Pool, the Shaded Pool, and the Bean-shaped Pool. CME Central also offers various areas and function rooms for conventions, conferences, parties, weddings and other special occasions.

CME Central is located at km. 24 Manila East Road, Taytay, Rizal. For inquiries and reservations, please call 660-2801, 658-2065, 284-4740.

Going Greek this summer at the Julius Maggi Kitchen

SATISFY YOUR FAMILY'S ADVENTUROUS palates and let them experience the exotic flavors of Greek cuisine in your own home! This March, the Julius Maggi Kitchen (JMK) is holding a series of free cooking demos for Nestlé Club members dubbed Mediterranean Easter. JMK's featured chef will share Greek specialties like Tzatziki, a dip made with yogurt, cucumber and garlic puree; Saganaki, fried cheese; Moussaka, an eggplant casserole; Souvlaki, seasoned and grilled meat on a skewer; and Baklava, a dessert made of fillo pastry layers with nuts, sugar, syrup and cloves. You'll also learn about Greek ingredients and terms like mezédes, pita, fillo pastry and feta cheese.

To complement the Mediterranean Easter demo, Nestlé Club is offering an extended cooking demo on Refreshing Summer Beverages where you'll get various concoctions for delicious thirst quenchers using Nestea, Nestlé Yogurts and Nestlé Premium Pasteurized Juices.

The Nestlé Club continues to offer raffles and promos for its members! Be the first to arrive with the most number of friends who are not yet members and win exciting prizes in the Member-Get-Member (MGM) Promo. All members may also join the Lucky Member Raffle. An activity exclusive for current Nestlé Club members, My Best Nestlé Recipe lets you share your very own specialty recipe using any Nestlé product/s for a chance to present it in the next cooking demo! Submit your entries complete with your name, address, contact numbers, e-mail, and photo to Nestlé Consumer Services via email at Consumer.Services@ph.nestle.com, fax at 897-0987, or hand mail to Consumer Services, Nestlé Center, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City.

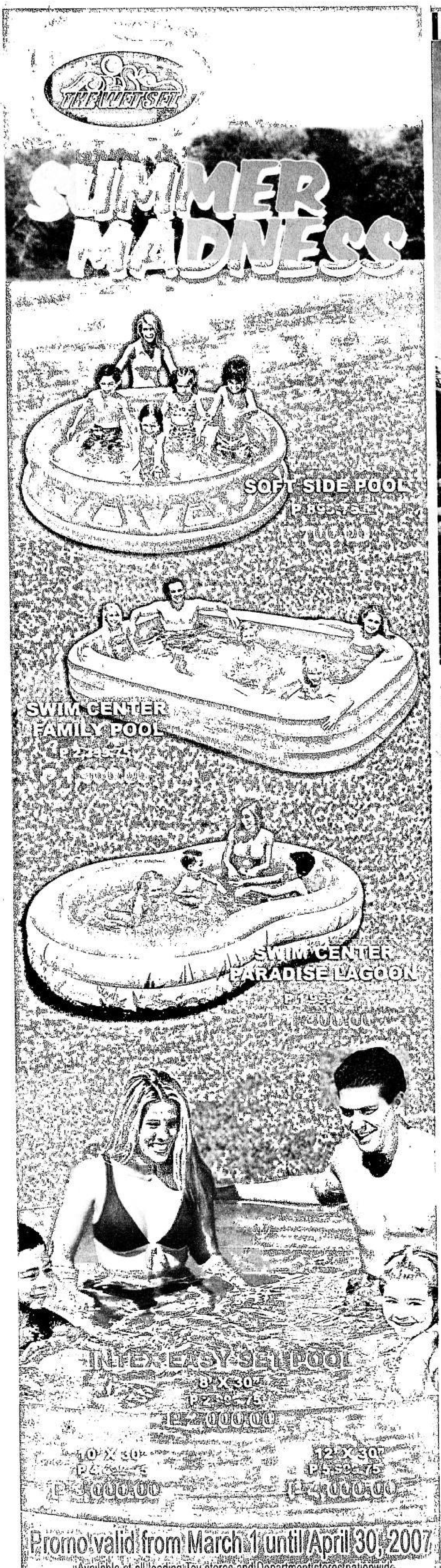
These free cooking demos and lifestyle lectures for new and old Nestlé Club members will be held on March 15, 17, 20, 22 and 24 from 2-5 p.m. at the Julius Maggi Kitchen, Ground Floor of the Nestlé Center, 31 Plaza Drive Rockwell Center, Makati City. A session reserved for current Nestlé Club members will be held on March 29 from 2-5 p.m. Please make your reservations by calling 727-4137 or 0916-7088013 starting March 5.

The Nestlé Club will also hold a paying class dubbed Baking 101 on March 31 from 2-5 p.m. For only P400 and a proof of purchase of Nestlé product/s worth P200, you can be part of a group hands-on class and learn how to make brownies, cookies, muffins and simple cakes, and get bonus recipes for icings and frostings. You can also master baking fundamentals like measuring ingredients and identifying baking utensils and ingredients.

For queries on how to become part of the Nestlé Club, you may contact Nestlé Consumer Services at 898-0061 or send a fax to 897-0987. You may also e-mail them at Consumer.Services@ph.nestle.com, visit www.nestlerecipes.com.ph on the web, or write to P.O. Box 1163 Makati Central Post Office, 1251 Metro Manila, Philippines.

SUMMER ADVENTURE AT ZOOBIC SAFARI

Shown are Undersecretary of Tourism Services and Regional Office Oscar P. Palabyab; Robert L. Yupangco, president of Residence Inn Tagaytay Hotel Mountain Resort and Zoo, Paradizoo Theme Farm Mendez Cavite and Zoobic Safari Subic Bay Freeport's Adventure Park; and Trix Syjuco, Residence Inn group spokesperson. Zoobic Safari is a 15-ha. land where local and foreign guests can see an astonishing sight of diverse exotic animals roaming and frolicking in their natural habitat. Zoobic Safari Adventure Park features the following exciting safari adventures: Close Encounter - an exciting close encounter with Siberian and Bengal tigers; Tiger Safari - a once-in-a-lifetime experience of riding a safari jeep in a grassland filled with roaming tigers; Zoobic educational show - featuring live animals, jungle survival with Aetas, and the newest show of unique mini animals performing live with the help of a midget trainer; and Zoobic Safari's Crocodile Farm - the first of its kind in the Philippines. For details please call 899-9824, 898-3695.



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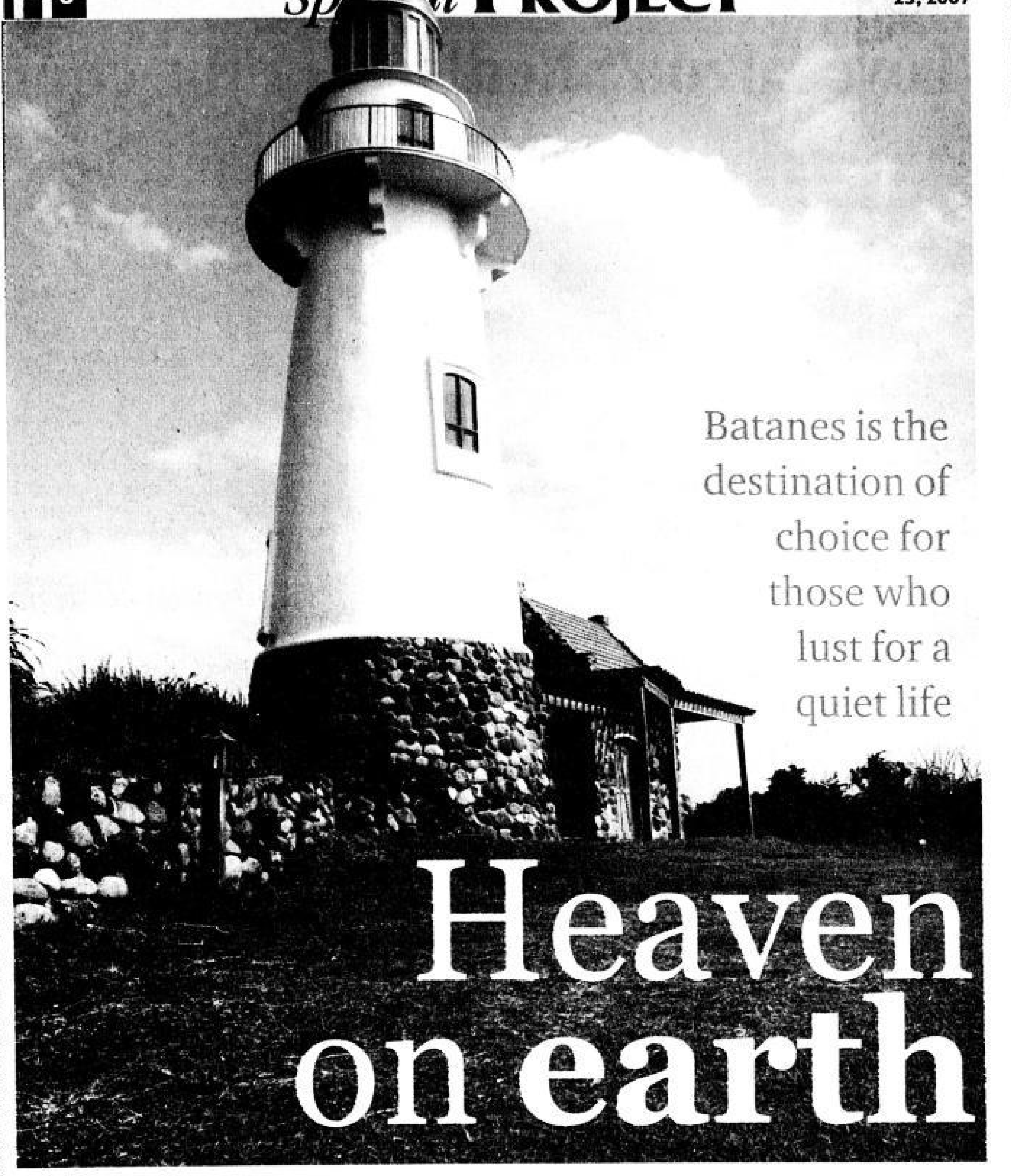

Heaven on earth

Batanes is the destination of choice for those who lust for a quiet life

Text by Marlet D. Salazar
Photos by Raquel P. Gomez

THE LOOK ON THE FACES OF THE PEOPLE ON BOARD varies. Some are calm; others tense. And one lady grips her rosary as if her life depended on it. But evidently, everyone is quiet. The waves are huge alright, but for a group of islands bounded by the China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, these seem to be perfectly normal.

A 45-minute faluwa ride to Sabtang on an overcast and windy day makes things a little more, well, exciting. A faluwa is the motorized boat used for island hopping.

A trip to Batanes has always been about fun, adventure, and tranquility. Without this experience, it would have never been as memorable.

So much has been said and written about Batanes. Opportunities for magnificent photographs abound. It is the dream destination of shutterbugs because anywhere you look at there is a perfect photograph just waiting to be captured. Almost half of Batanes is made up of hills and mountains enveloped in that breathtaking seascape.

Still, Batanes holds such magical mystery. And to borrow one writer's perspective, it is "a state of mind."

Its distance from the rest of the Philippines could very well be its No. 1 attraction. About 860 kilometers north of Manila, it is paradise for city dwellers who yearn for some quiet time.

Neither the strong winds nor the dipping temperature (that can drop to as low as 7 degrees Celsius) could stop us from going there. It was February, just nearing toward the end of "really" cold months that usually starts in December.

It doesn't take a while to sink in that we finally set foot on the celebrated small archipelago. The wind breezes through our faces . . . and caps. . . and jackets. . . and we try in vain to gather the stuff that are blown away.

Divinely provincial

The rural feel immediately seeps through our senses. It is indeed magical.

Batanes is most famous for its glorious coastline, vast rolling hills, and centuries-old stone houses. But the town of Basco with its divinely provincial setting is already an object of enchantment.

Environment-friendly bicycles are used to get around even in nearby towns although a few scooters have already found their way into the lifestyle of some Ivatans.

Of the 10 islands in Batanes only three are inhabited. The population of only 16,000 is spread over Batan, Itbayat, and Sabtang. The province is the least populated in the country.

The capital, Basco, is in Batan which serves as the center of commerce and trade. The schools and the parish church are also located there, and the municipal and provincial capitols are just within a few strides away from each other.

The islands of Itbayat and Sabtang are part of the six municipalities that made up the whole of Batanes. The others include Basco, Ivana, Mahatao, and Uyugan.

In recent years, Batanes has transformed into a must-see tourist destination after being only known to be the point of reference for typhoons. With this development, lodging inns are gradually increasing.

Pension Ivatan is the newest inn in the island. A literal uphill climb leads to the best rooms which give a perfect vista of the town of Basco overlooking the Kanyuyan Beach and Port and Basco Lighthouse on the right.

Batanes may be a far-flung area but Christianity still found its way to the province. Like most places in the north, it is not short of old churches.

The San Jose Church fronting the Ivana seaport underwent three renovations. Its foundation dates back to 1795 but was built in 1814. We are invited to see the ruins at the back of the church. There is an eerie feeling while investigating what has remained of the old church but the photographs proved irresistible.

Like churches, Batanes does not lack imposing lighthouses. Aside from their main purpose, they have become perfect subjects of photographs what with the blue sky as flawless background.

Naturally polite

And can someone let the trip continue without stopping by the Honesty Store? As the name suggests, this famous store will test your truthfulness.

The jeepney ride brought many surprises but one thing that really sticks to my mind is the courteousness of the drivers. This is something Greek to me so I try to indulge myself in witnessing their incessant acknowledgment of each other when someone gives way in narrow roads.

This refreshing change of atmosphere is spiced up by the wonderful scenery of the ocean on the right and the rolling hills on the left.

The faluwa ride to Sabtang is postponed for a day. We are advised that it is impossible to travel because the weather is not cooperating. Thanks to the blessing from the Basco's parish priest asked by one of the members of the group, we're off to Sabtang the next day.

The "slight" turbulence at sea is what prompted a passenger to hold her rosary and pray for our safety. Clueless of what is really happening, I am beaming during the ride amazed by the huge waves that would most likely swallow our boat.

As my friend put it: "*Ga-bahay yung alon no?!* (The waves are the size of a house)."

Sabtang is about 41 square kilometers with its central part covered with mountains.

While some are still dazed by the ride, we headed to Chavayan. The drive through the dirt road takes us to one of the Japanese garrisons during the Occupation. While Ivatans in Basco is slowly changing the look of their houses, residents of Chavayan is able to preserve the old stone houses.

Itbayat intrigues me. The second most populated among the municipalities, it is about 95 square kilometers. I can see a glimpse of the island from the Ivana port. It will take about four hours of faluwa ride to get there.

The still uncorrupted natural wonder that is Batanes may have been slowly embracing modernity. The fear of many conservationists and environmentalists is that the culture of the Ivatans may become a thing of the past once they fully embrace the changes that are introduced there.

But the relaxing way of life continues to be like an open invitation to become one with the locals. The Ivatans never cease to greet you in the streets, in the stores, in the church, and everywhere you go.

If we follow the religious context of heaven which is "a place or condition of supreme happiness and peace where good people are," then Batanes is indeed heaven on earth.